DARK CYBERTRON
THE TRANSFORMERS
VOLUME 1

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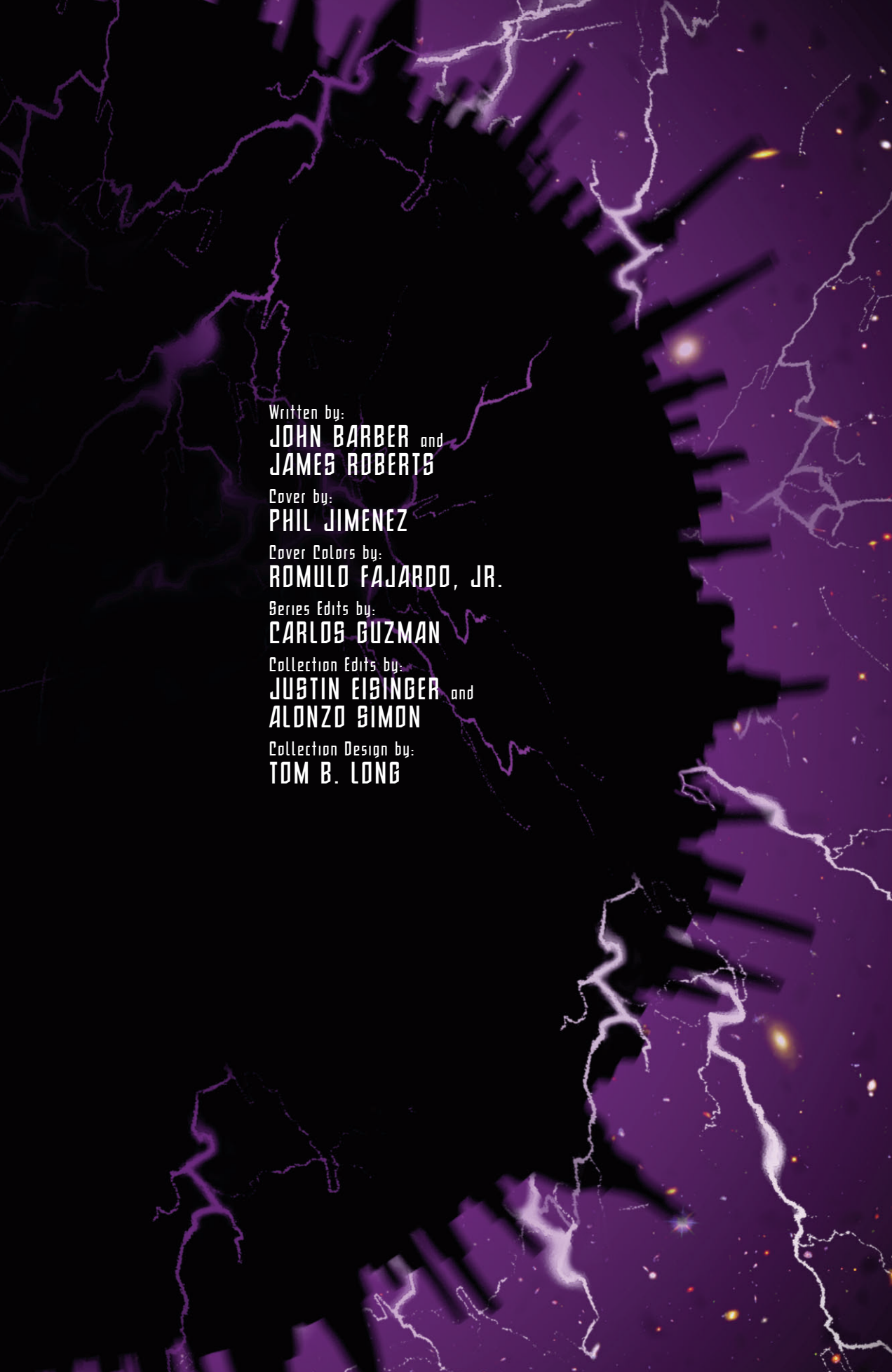

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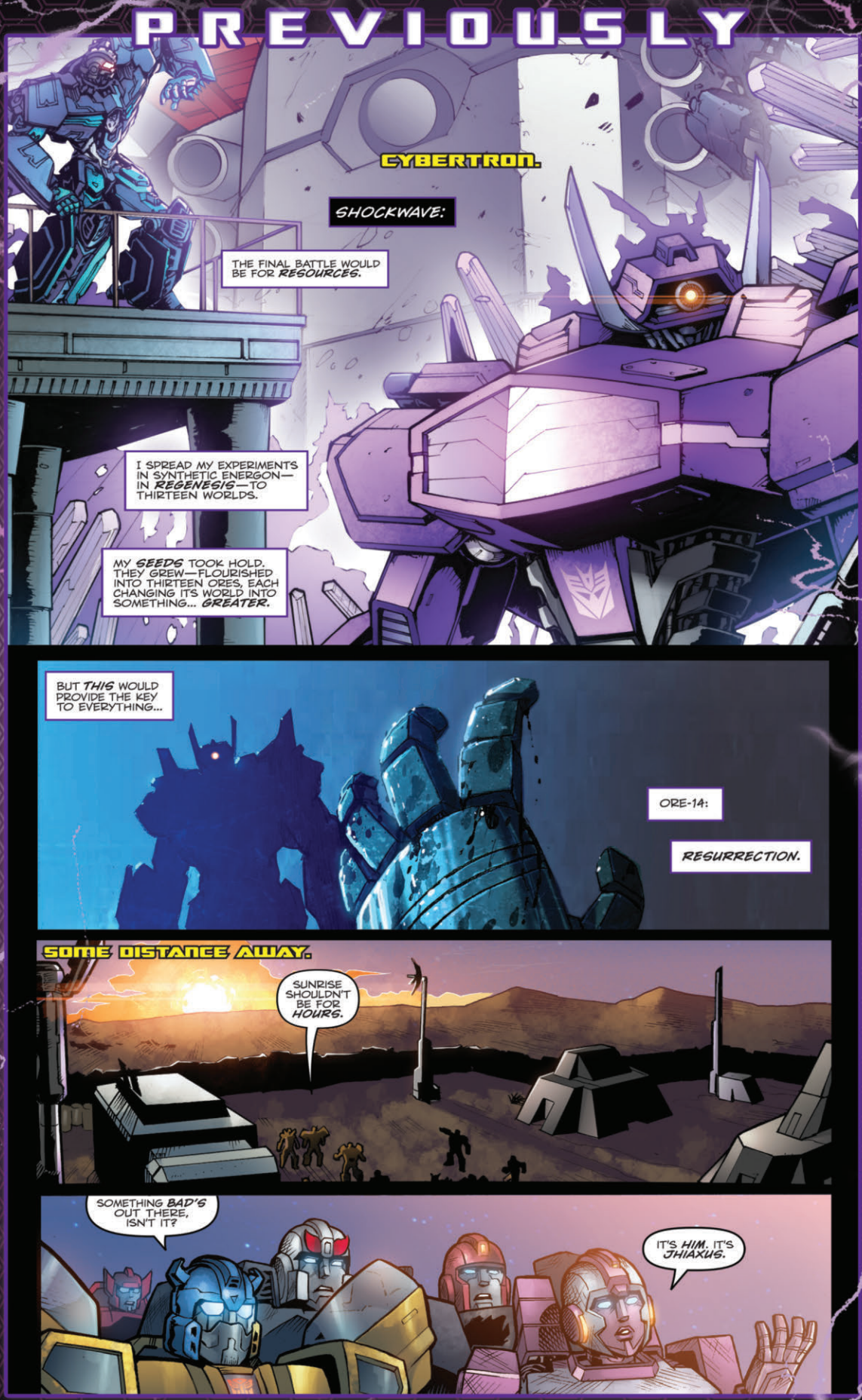
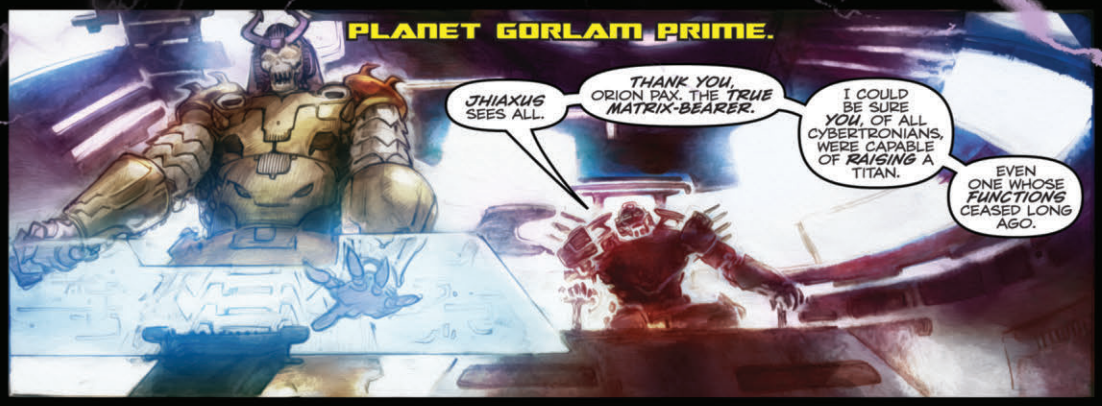
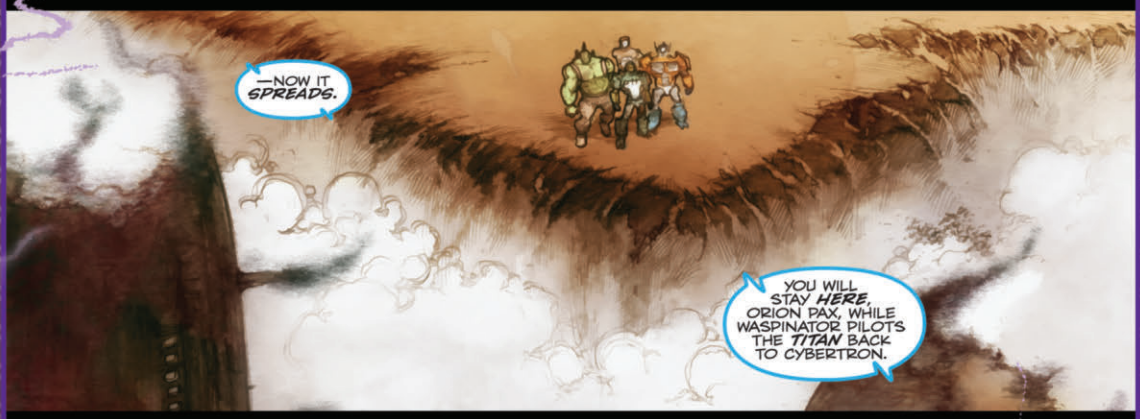

PREVIOUSLY
CYBERTRON.
SHOCKWAVE:
THE FINAL BATTLE WOULD BE FOR RESOURCES.
I SPREAD MY EXPERIMENTS IN SYNTHETIC ENERGON—IN REGENESIS—TO THIRTEEN WORLDS.
MY SEEDS TOOK HOLD. THEY GREW—FLOURISHED INTO THIRTEEN ORES, EACH CHANGING ITS WORLD INTO SOMETHING... GREATER.
BUT THIS WOULD PROVIDE THE KEY TO EVERYTHING...
ORE-14:
RESURRECTION.
SOME DISTANCE AWAY.
SUNRISE SHOULDN'T BE FOR HOURS.
SOMETHING BAD'S OUT THERE, ISN'T IT?
IT'S HIM. IT'S JHIAXUS.


PLANET GORLAM PRIME.
JHIAXUS SEES ALL.
THANK YOU, ORION PAX. THE TRUE MATRIX-BEARER.
I COULD BE SURE YOU, OF ALL CYBERTRONIANS, WERE CAPABLE OF RAISING A TITAN.
EVEN ONE WHOSE FUNCTIONS CEASED LONG AGO.

THE ORE MY STUDENT, SHOCKWAVE, PLANTED SO LONG AGO—THE ONE THAT PROVIDED AN OPENING INTO THE DEAD UNIVERSE—


—NOW IT SPREADS.
YOU WILL STAY HERE, ORION PAX, WHILE WASPINATOR PILOTS THE TITAN BACK TO CYBERTRON.

THE LOST LIGHT.
WELL?
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

ONCE WE FIND THE KNIGHTS, THEY EITHER RESTORE CYBERTRON TO ITS FORMER GLORY OR WE START AGAIN ON CYBERUTOPIA.
THAT'S ALWAYS BEEN THE OBJECTIVE.

I'M HOPING FOR MORE MASSIVE, RAMBLING DIVERSIONS.
WHO WANTS CLOSURE? LET'S REALLY STRETCH THIS SUCKER OUT.

LONGER TERM... FOR ME, I DON'T REALLY KNOW. NOT REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
FOR EVERYONE ELSE—FOR MY CREW—I'D SETTLE FOR HAPPY EVER AFTER.
THEY DESERVE IT.

CHAPTER 1

PROLOGUE Art by: BRENDAN CAHILL • Colors by: J.P. BOVE

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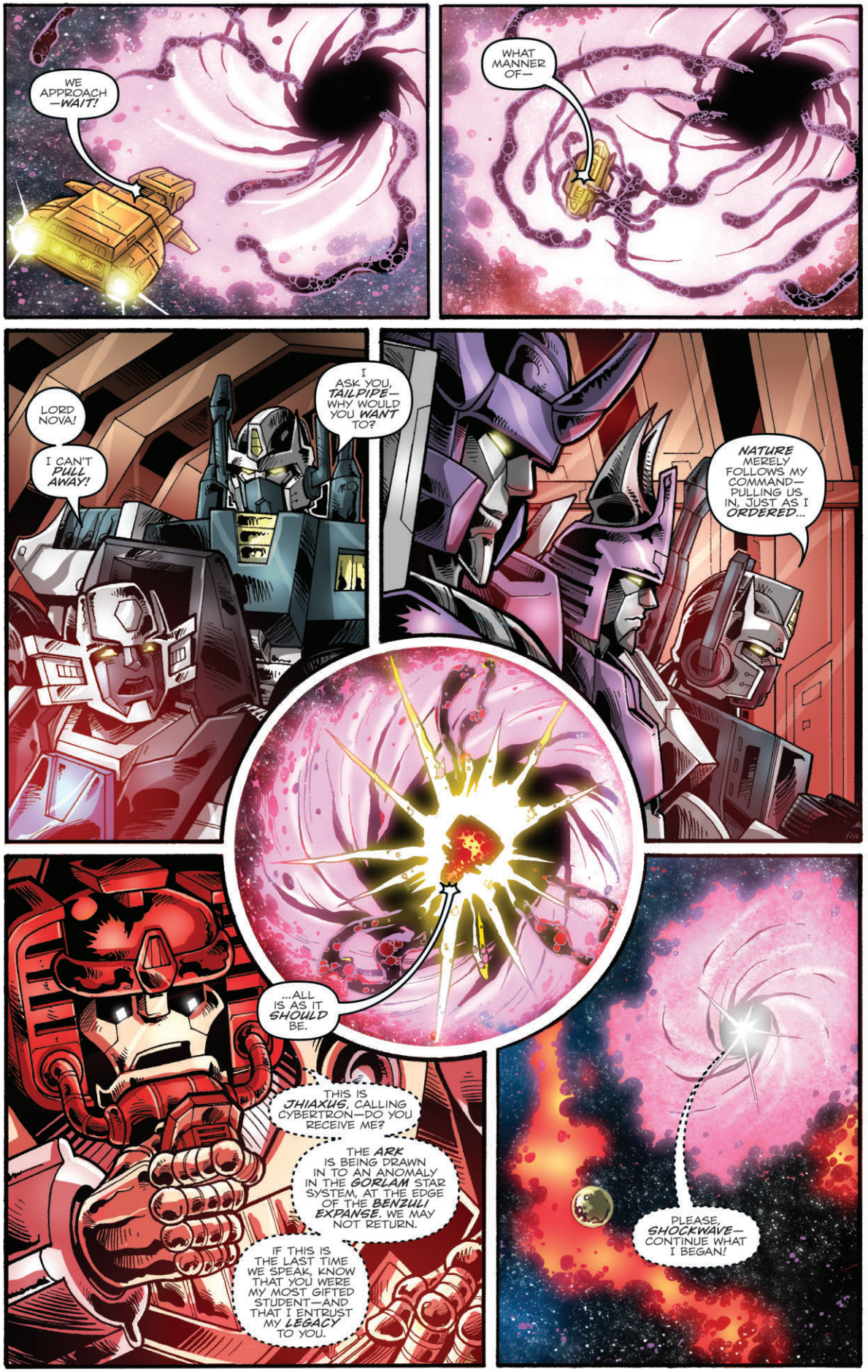
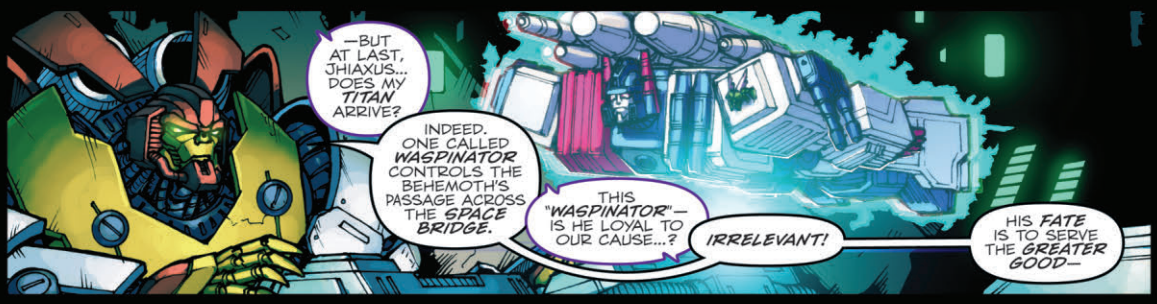
DEEP SPACE.
WHAT IS THAT?
IT IS... AN ANOMALY OF SOME MANNER, NOVA PRIME.
I CAN TELL THAT BY LOOKING, JHIAXUS.
I REQUIRE YOUR KEEN SCIENTIFIC MIND TO PROVIDE A MORE ELABORATE EXPLANATION.
DOES YOUR "ANOMALY" PRESENT A DANGER TO OUR MISSION?
MY APOLOGIES, LORD NOVA. THIS... THIS IS LIKE NOTHING I'VE SEEN.
THE ENERGY RADIATING FROM IT... IS UTTERLY UNIQUE.
LET ME SEE.
CYCLONUS, YOU OVERSTEP YOUR BOUNDS. IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT GALVATRON HAS ALLOWED YOU TO—
-ERP.
KLANK
HM...

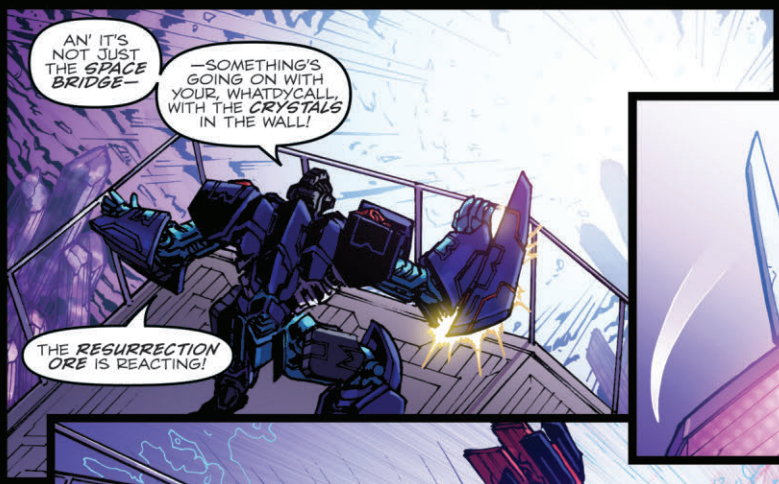
...THIS REMINDS ME OF SOMETHING.
A RADIATION SO... COLD.
SO... UNNATURAL.
IT REMINDS ME...
...OF COURSE. A LEGEND OF OUR CREATOR, PRIMUS, AND HIS TITANS—OF BRUISED WORLDS AND ROGUE RADIATION AND STARS BURNING BLACK IN THE SKY.
THE ANCIENTS SPOKE OF A FAILED REALITY— A REALITY AT ODDS WITH OUR OWN.
A PLANE OF EXISTENCE THAT THRIVED UPON DECAY—
—A DEAD UNIVERSE.
SUPERSTITIOUS NONSENSE, MY LORD.
THE ERA OF MYTH AND LEGEND IS LONG OVER.
OURS IS AN ERA OF SCIENCE.
THERE IS A RATIONAL EXPLANATION FOR THIS PHENOMENON.
LOOK AT THESE READINGS, THEN!
USE YOUR SCIENCE, JHIAXUS.
THIS IS A PORTAL TO ANOTHER UNIVERSE.
ALPHA TRION BLESSED OUR SHIP THAT WE MAY SPREAD THE CYBERTRONIAN WAY—FREEDOM— ACROSS THE GALAXY.
NOT THAT WE MAY RISK EVERYTHING ON A WHIM.
OUR MISSION, CYCLONUS, IS TO IMPOSE THE WILL OF CYBERTRON ACROSS ALL OF CREATION.
WE SHALL BE THANKFUL FATE HAS DELIVERED UPON US ANOTHER UNIVERSE IN NEED OF CONQUERING.
SET COURSE FOR THE ANOMALY, GALVATRON.
AT ONCE, PRIME.

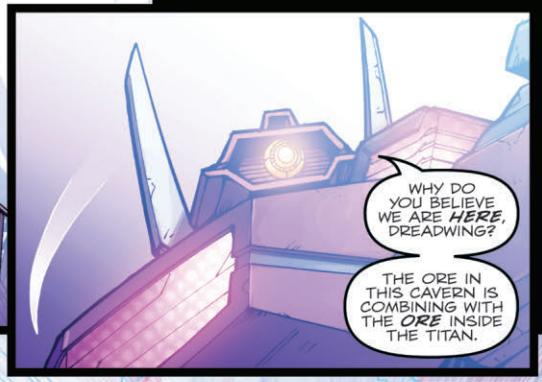

WE APPROACH —WAIT!
WHAT MANNER OF—
LORD NOVA!
I CAN'T PULL AWAY!
I ASK YOU, TAILPIPE— WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO?
NATURE MERELY FOLLOWS MY COMMAND— PULLING US IN, JUST AS I ORDERED...
...ALL IS AS IT SHOULD BE.
THIS IS JHIAXUS, CALLING CYBERTRON—DO YOU RECEIVE ME?
THE ARK IS BEING DRAWN IN TO AN ANOMALY IN THE GORLAM STAR SYSTEM, AT THE EDGE OF THE BENZULI EXPANSE. WE MAY NOT RETURN.
IF THIS IS THE LAST TIME WE SPEAK, KNOW THAT YOU WERE MY MOST GIFTED STUDENT—AND THAT I ENTRUST MY LEGACY TO YOU.
PLEASE, SHOCKWAVE— CONTINUE WHAT I BEGAN!

CYBERTRON, 6 MILLION YEARS LATER.
PRESENT DAY.
I HAVE CARRIED OUT YOUR REQUEST, JHIAXUS...
FOR TOO LONG I HAVE WORKED IN THE SHADOWS, MARKING TIME, ENSURING THAT EVERYTHING IS IN PLACE...
...NOW MY TRUE COLORS SHALL FLY FOR ALL TO SEE.
SHOCKWAVE... BOSS, WE GOT UNUSUAL ENERGY FLUCTUATIONS...
OF COURSE WE HAVE, DREADWING.
AH, THE INSTANTS PASSED LIKE EONS—


—BUT AT LAST, JHIAXUS... DOES MY TITAN ARRIVE?
INDEED. ONE CALLED WASPINATOR CONTROLS THE BEHEMOTH'S PASSAGE ACROSS THE SPACE BRIDGE.
THIS "WASPINATOR"— IS HE LOYAL TO OUR CAUSE...?
IRRELEVANT!
HIS FATE IS TO SERVE THE GREATER GOOD—

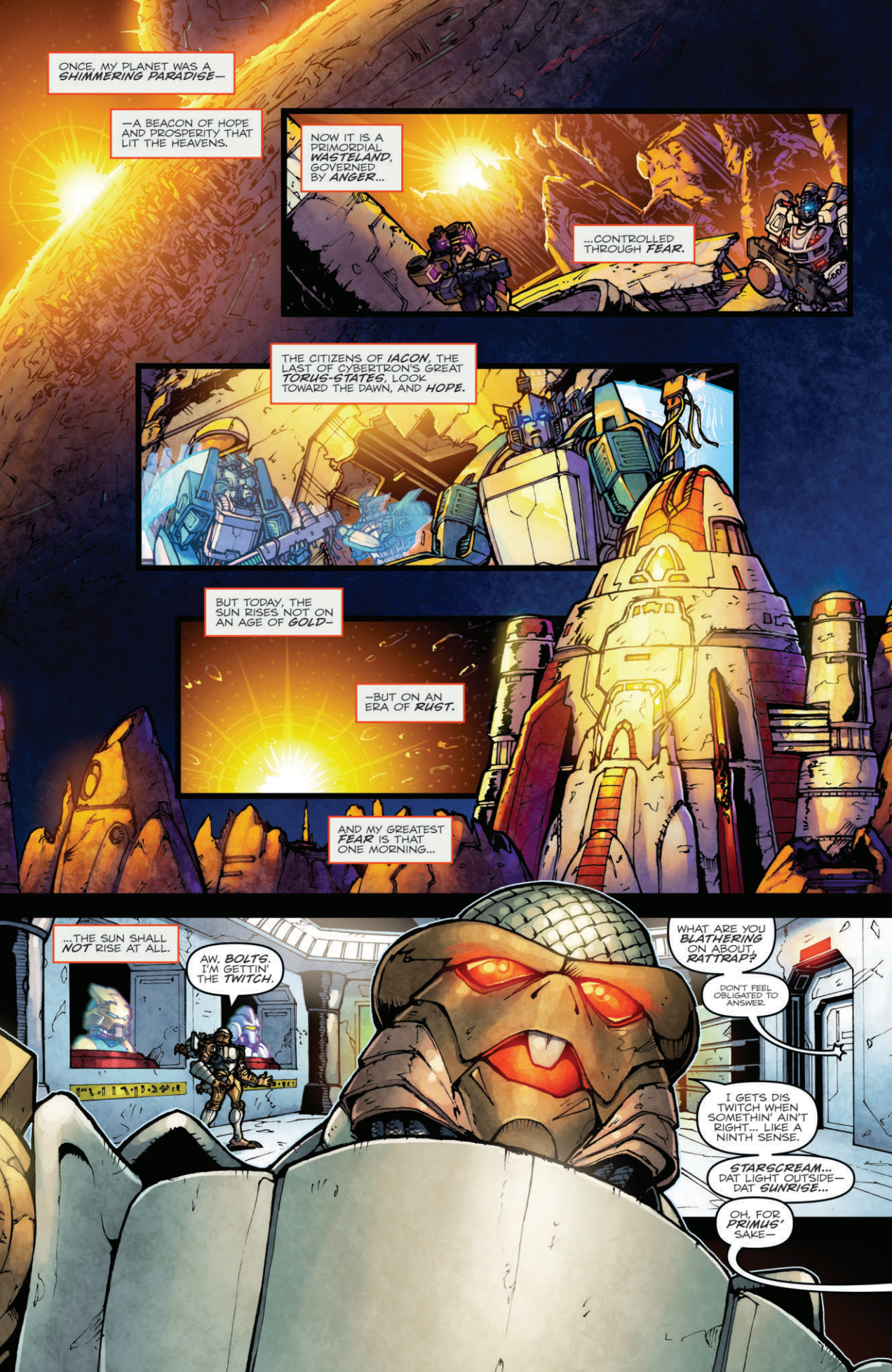
—AS IS ALL OF OURS.
FATE.
YES, OF COURSE, JHIAXUS.
BOGG! THE ENERGY'S SPIKING!

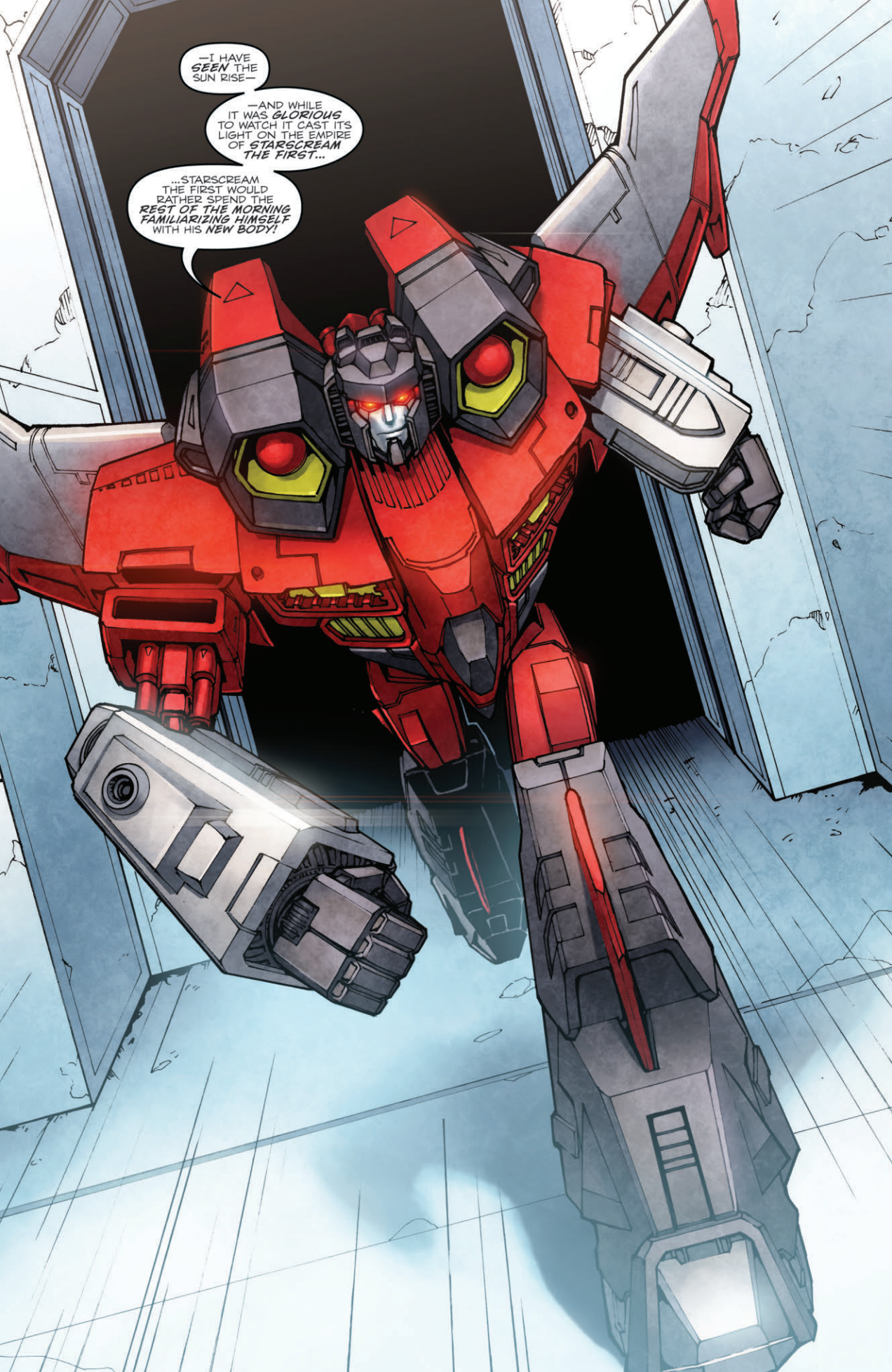

AN' IT'S NOT JUST THE SPACE BRIDGE—
—SOMETHING'S GOING ON WITH YOUR, WHATDYCALL, WITH THE CRYSTALS IN THE WALL!
THE RESURRECTION ORE IS REACTING!


WHY DO YOU BELIEVE WE ARE HERE, DREADWING?
THE ORE IN THIS CAVERN IS COMBINING WITH THE ORE INSIDE THE TITAN.

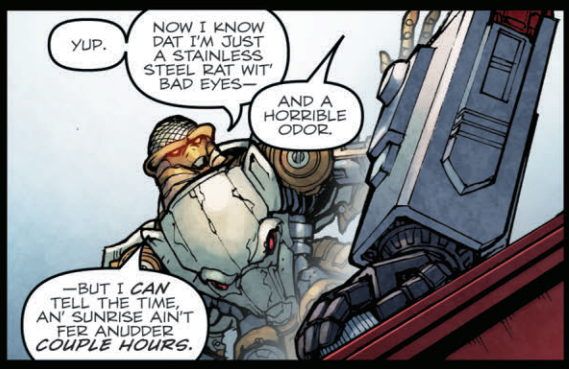
THE— WHAT?!
AH, WHAT'S THAT MEAN, BOSS? WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHEN THE ORES REACH FINAL SYNTHESIS, SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN.
SOMETHING BOTH FASCINATING AND—AS FAR AS THE TITAN AND ITS PILOT ARE CONCERNED—

RRRAAARGH!
ZZZZZHHAAH!
—UNIQUELY PAINFUL.
BOSS—WE GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE!
THE SCREAMING—THAT LIGHT—!
ZZYBERTRON! I ZZURVIVED!
WASPINATOR IS HOME AT LAZZT!
DO NOT FEAR THE LIGHT...
...BATHE IN IT, DREADWING...
...BATHE IN THE *FIRE* OF THE *FUTURE*.
WAR RAVAGED MY HOMEWORLD OF CYBERTRON—AN ***ENDLESS*** WAR THAT CARRIED US TO THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION.


ONCE, MY PLANET WAS A SHIMMERING PARADISE—
—A BEACON OF HOPE AND PROSPERITY THAT LIT THE HEAVENS.
NOW IT IS A PRIMORDIAL WASTELAND, GOVERNED BY ANGER...
...CONTROLLED THROUGH FEAR.
THE CITIZENS OF IACON, THE LAST OF CYBERTRON'S GREAT TORUS-STATES, LOOK TOWARD THE DAWN, AND HOPE.
BUT TODAY, THE SUN RISES NOT ON AN AGE OF GOLD—
—BUT ON AN ERA OF RUST.
AND MY GREATEST FEAR IS THAT ONE MORNING...
...THE SUN SHALL NOT RISE AT ALL.
AW, BOLTS. I'M GETTIN' THE TWITCH.
WHAT ARE YOU BLATHERING ON ABOUT, RATTRAP?
DON'T FEEL OBLIGATED TO ANSWER.
I GETS DIS TWITCH WHEN SOMETHIN' AIN'T RIGHT... LIKE A NINTH SENSE.
STARSCREAM... DAT LIGHT OUTSIDE— DAT SUNRISE...
OH, FOR PRIMUS' SAKE—


—I HAVE *SEEN* THE SUN RISE—
—AND WHILE IT WAS *GLORIOUS* TO WATCH IT CAST ITS LIGHT ON THE EMPIRE OF *STARSCREAM THE FIRST*...
...STARSCREAM THE FIRST WOULD RATHER SPEND THE *REST OF THE MORNING FAMILIARIZING HIMSELF* WITH HIS *NEW BODY!*

AFTER ALL— THE PEOPLE OF CYBERTRON ELECTED ME LEADER OF...
...OF...
...THE SUN HASN'T MOVED SINCE I WENT IN THERE.


YUP.
NOW I KNOW DAT I'M JUST A STAINLESS STEEL RAT WIT' BAD EYES—
AND A HORRIBLE ODOR.
—BUT I CAN TELL THE TIME, AN' SUNRISE AIN'T FER ANUDDER COUPLE HOURS.

WELL...
HUH.
COMPUTER— CROSS-SPECTRUM SCAN.

IF IT ISN'T SUNRISE...
THERE. ON THE TERAHERTZ SCALE... I'VE SEEN A SIMILAR READING BEFORE.
IT WAS ONE OF MY LEAST FAVORITE.
ENERGY READING = CLASSIFIED DATA
"CLASSIFIED"? AW, HOW SWEET.
OVERRIDE. "STARSCREAM PRIME, PRIME ONE."

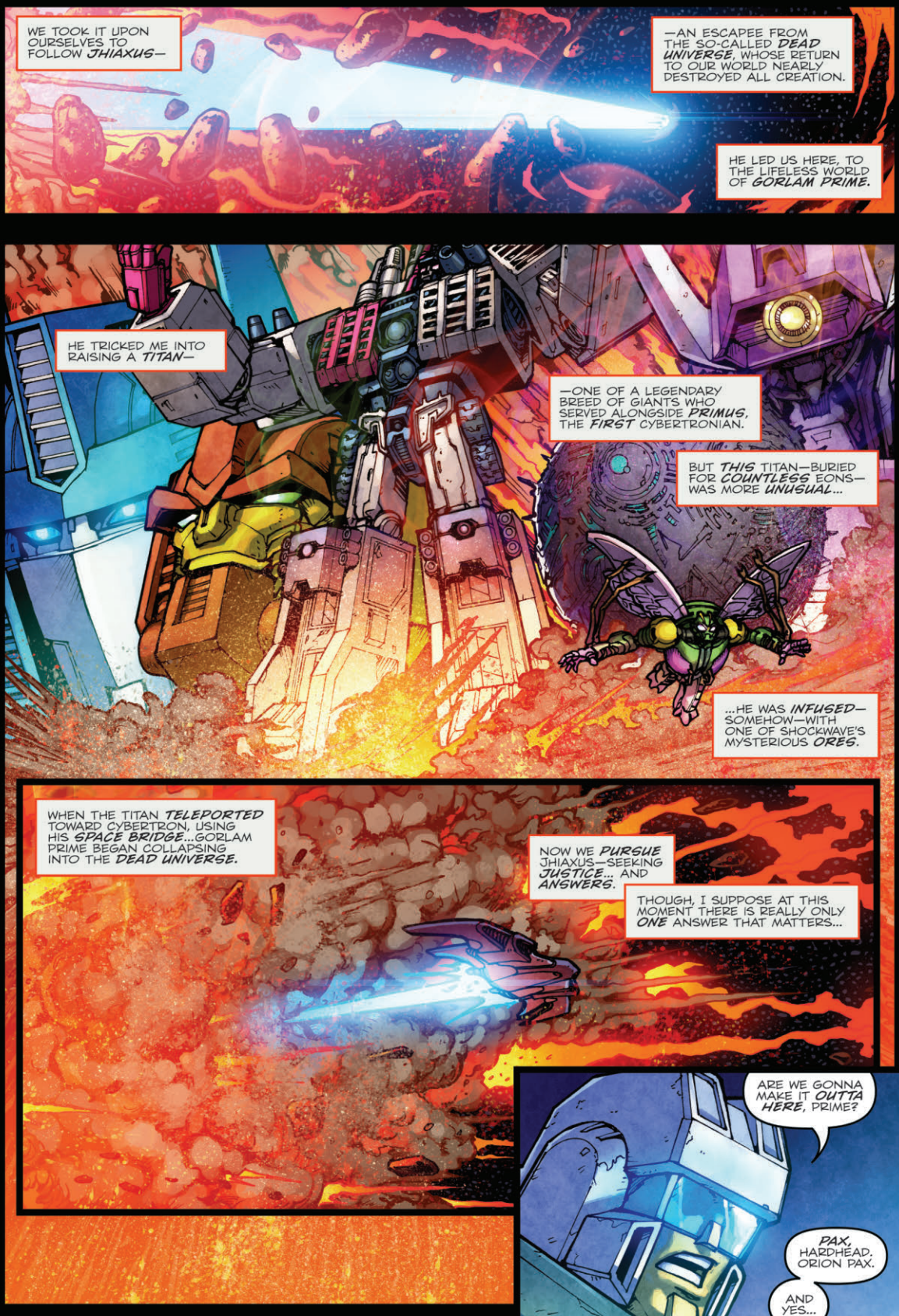
DATA • RELEASED
YEAH. YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I WAS AFRAID OF.
RATTRAP— CALL THE AUTOBOTS.

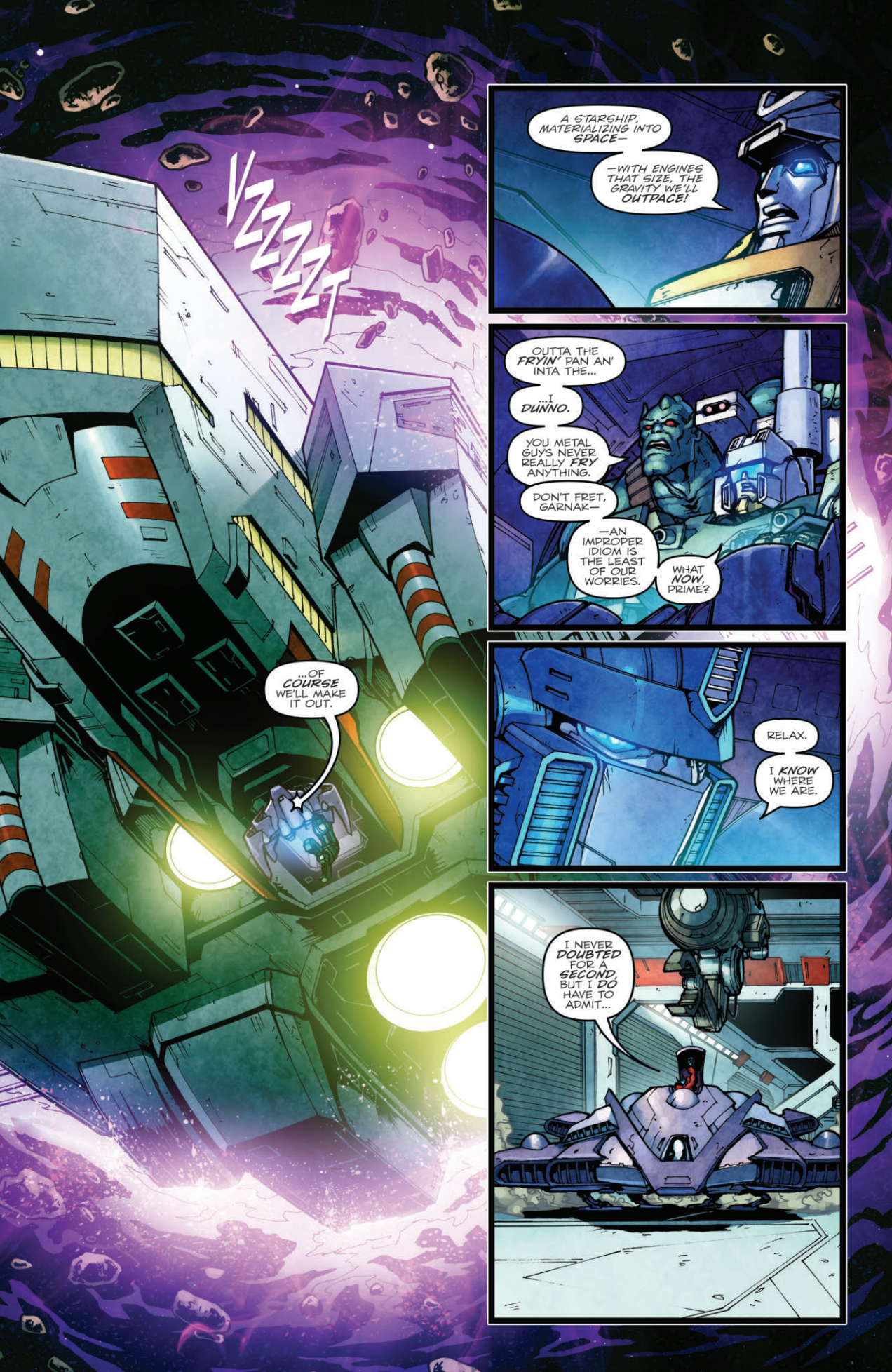
YOU, AH, I DON'T TINK DEY'LL BE REAL HAPPY-LIKE AFTER YA—
—AH—
—KICKED 'EM INTA DA WILDERNESS...

NOT BUMBLEBEE'S AUTOBOTS, YOU DUNCE.
I NEED AN EXPERT.

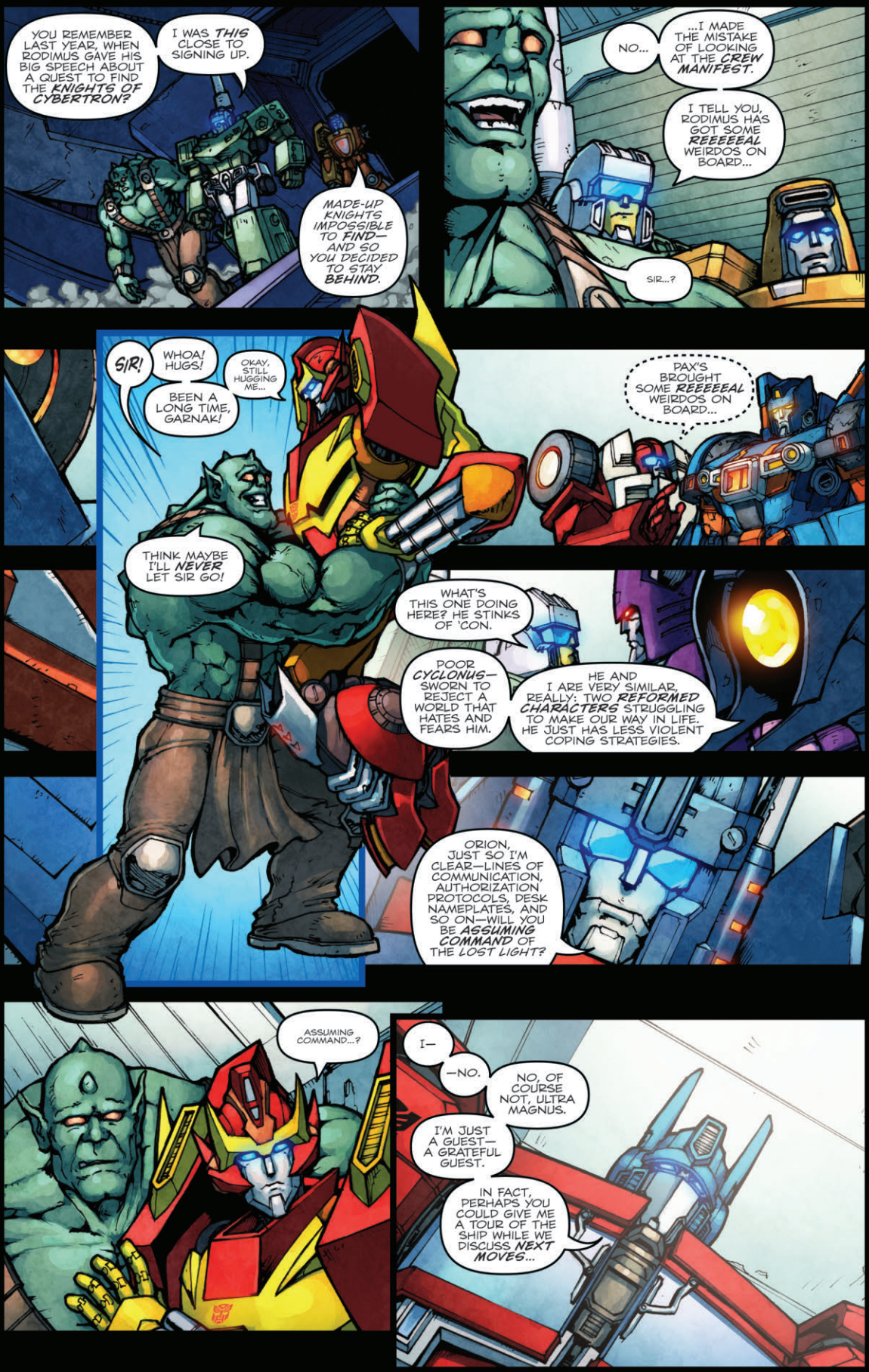
WAR ALLOWS FEAR TO BECOME A COMMODITY...
...AND IN AN ENDLESS WAR, TRADE IS ALWAYS GOOD.

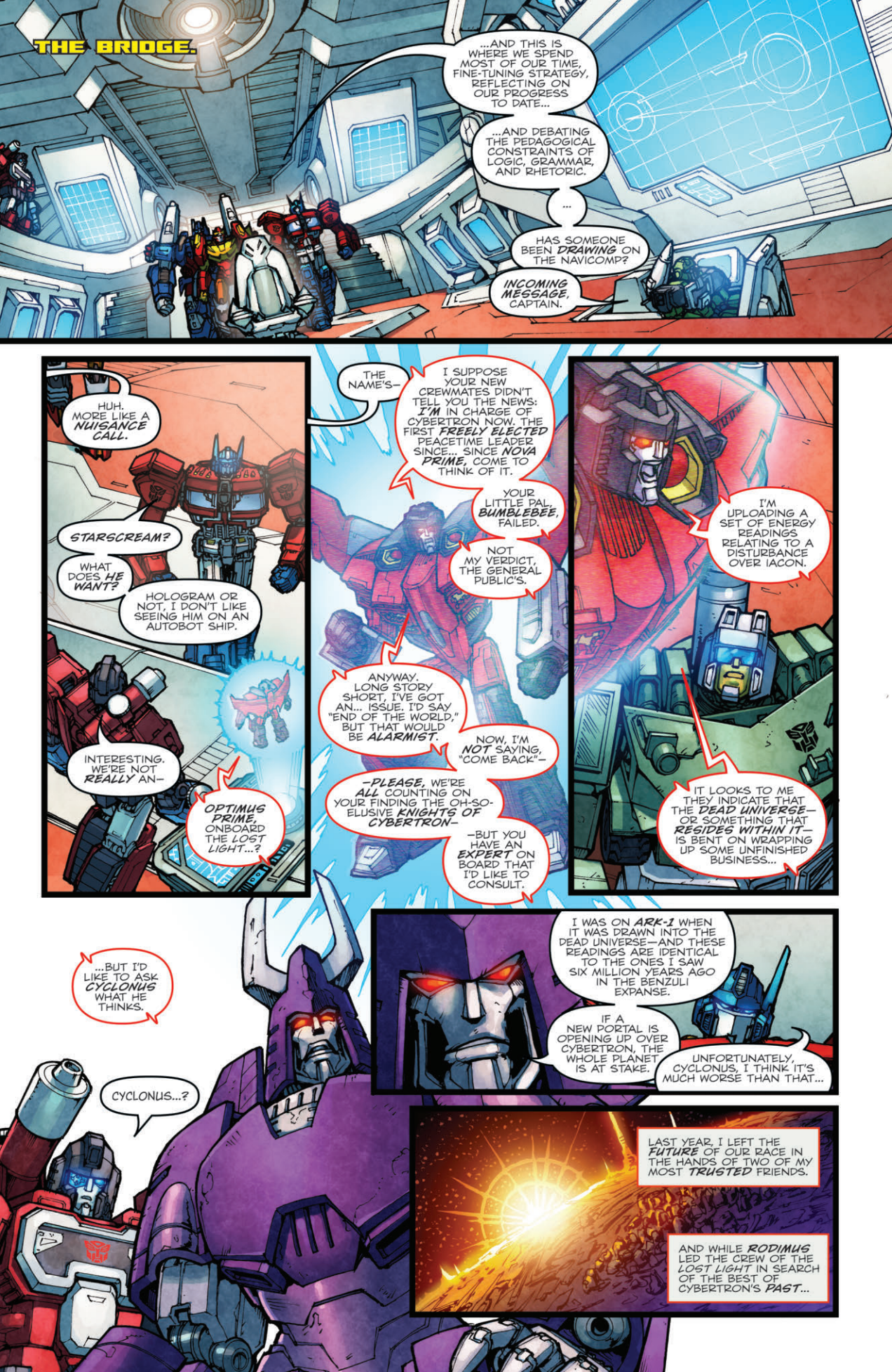
WHEN I COMMANDED THE AUTOBOTS—WHEN CYBERTRON WAS UNDER MY PROTECTION—
—I DID MY BEST TO STAY TRUE TO MY IDEALS.
AND WHEN THE WAR ENDED—WHEN THE AUTOBOTS WON—I REALIZED MY BEST WASN'T WHAT THE WORLD NEEDED.
ONCE, MY FELLOW CYBERTRONIANS CALLED ME OPTIMUS PRIME.
BUT NOW... NOW I AM—
ORION PAX— THE GRAVITY WELL DRAWS US IN!
IF WE CAN'T GET FREE, OUR BATTLE WON'T EVEN BEGIN!
WHEELIE'S RIGHT, PRIME— I MEAN, PAX!
ENGINES ARE AT 120% AND WE'RE LOSING SKY.
WHATEVER'S HAPPENING TO GORLAM PRIME— IT'S INCREASING IN MASS AS IT COLLAPSES, BUT THAT'S—
THAT AIN'T POSSIBLE!
HARDHEAD, GARNAK—WHEN YOU'VE SEEN AS MUCH AS I HAVE, YOU LEARN ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.
I HAVE NO DESIRE TO LEAD, BUT THESE SOLDIERS— THESE FRIENDS—
—PLACE THEIR FAITH IN ME.


WE TOOK IT UPON OURSELVES TO FOLLOW JHIAXUS—
—AN ESCAPEE FROM THE SO-CALLED DEAD UNIVERSE, WHOSE RETURN TO OUR WORLD NEARLY DESTROYED ALL CREATION.
HE LED US HERE, TO THE LIFELESS WORLD OF GORLAM PRIME.
HE TRICKED ME INTO RAISING A TITAN—
—ONE OF A LEGENDARY BREED OF GIANTS WHO SERVED ALONGSIDE PRIMUS, THE FIRST CYBERTRONIAN.
BUT THIS TITAN—BURIED FOR COUNTLESS EONS—WAS MORE UNUSUAL...
...HE WAS INFUSED—SOMEHOW—WITH ONE OF SHOCKWAVE'S MYSTERIOUS ORES.
WHEN THE TITAN TELEPORTED TOWARD CYBERTRON, USING HIS SPACE BRIDGE...GORLAM PRIME BEGAN COLLAPSING INTO THE DEAD UNIVERSE.
NOW WE PURSUE JHIAXUS—SEEKING JUSTICE... AND ANSWERS.
THOUGH, I SUPPOSE AT THIS MOMENT THERE IS REALLY ONLY ONE ANSWER THAT MATTERS...
ARE WE GONNA MAKE IT OUTTA HERE, PRIME?
PAX, HARDHEAD. ORION PAX.
AND YES...


VZZZZT
...OF COURSE WE'LL MAKE IT OUT.
A STARSHIP, MATERIALIZING INTO SPACE—
—WITH ENGINES THAT SIZE, THE GRAVITY WE'LL OUTPACE!
OUTTA THE FRYIN' PAN AN' INTA THE...
...I DUNNO.
YOU METAL GUYS NEVER REALLY FRY ANYTHING.
DON'T FRET, GARNAK—
—AN IMPROPER IDIOM IS THE LEAST OF OUR WORRIES.
WHAT NOW, PRIME?
RELAX.
I KNOW WHERE WE ARE.
I NEVER DOUBTED FOR A SECOND, BUT I DO HAVE TO ADMIT...

...I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU ALL ALIVE AND WELL, OLD FRIENDS!
ORION PAX! THANK YOU!
THANK ME?
FOR PROVING ME RIGHT!
PICTURE IT: WE'RE HEADING TOWARDS THE GALACTIC RIM, LOOKING FOR THUNDERCLASH—FULL STEAM AHEAD, ALL HANDS ON DECK—AND BLASTER PICKS UP A MESSAGE FROM GORLAM PRIME. SOMETHING LIKE:
AUTOBOTS IN TROUBLE, EXPLODING PLANET, POINT OF NO RETURN, KEEP AWAY, DO NOT ENGAGE, REPEAT, MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO RESCUE US...
...AND I SAY TO MAGNUS, I TURN TO HIM AND I SAY, I SAY "THAT'S EITHER THE MOST AUDACIOUS BIT OF REVERSE PSYCHOLOGY EVER, OR IT'S ORION PAX AND HE GENUINELY WANTS US TO STAY AWAY!"
RODIMUS—YOU'RE BABBLING.
BUT YOU DIDN'T STAY AWAY...
"AUTOBOTS IN TROUBLE"? WHAT DID YOU THINK I WAS GONNA DO?
HEY PAX—YOUR DISTRESS SIGNAL WAS SO EPIC I'VE GOT IT AS MY RINGTONE. WANNA LISTEN?
SWERVE, DON'T YOU DARE—
AUTOBOTS IN TROUBLE! EXPLODING PLANET!
AUTOBOTS IN TROUBLE! EXPLODING PLANET!

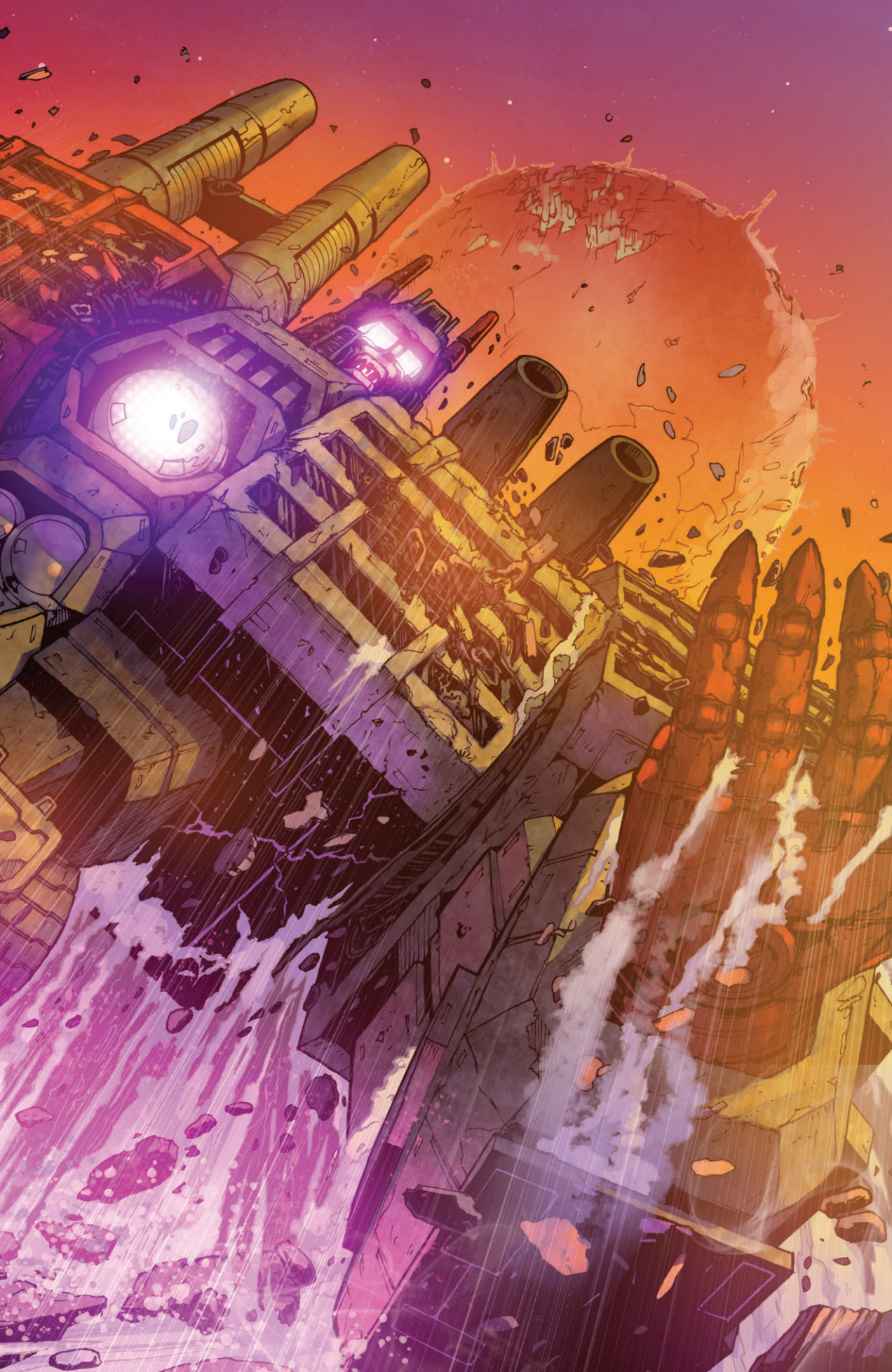

YOU REMEMBER LAST YEAR, WHEN RODIMUS GAVE HIS BIG SPEECH ABOUT A QUEST TO FIND THE KNIGHTS OF CYBERTRON?
I WAS THIS CLOSE TO SIGNING UP.
MADE-UP KNIGHTS IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND— AND SO YOU DECIDED TO STAY BEHIND.
NO...
...I MADE THE MISTAKE OF LOOKING AT THE CREW MANIFEST.
I TELL YOU, RODIMUS HAS GOT SOME REEEEEAL WEIRDOS ON BOARD...
SIR...?
SIR!
WHOA! HUGS!
OKAY, STILL HUGGING ME...
BEEN A LONG TIME, GARNAK!
THINK MAYBE I'LL NEVER LET SIR GO!
PAX'S BROUGHT SOME REEEEEAL WEIRDOS ON BOARD...
WHAT'S THIS ONE DOING HERE? HE STINKS OF 'CON.
POOR CYCLONUS— SWORN TO REJECT A WORLD THAT HATES AND FEARS HIM.
HE AND I ARE VERY SIMILAR, REALLY: TWO REFORMED CHARACTERS STRUGGLING TO MAKE OUR WAY IN LIFE. HE JUST HAS LESS VIOLENT COPING STRATEGIES.
ORION, JUST SO I'M CLEAR—LINES OF COMMUNICATION, AUTHORIZATION PROTOCOLS, DESK NAMEPLATES, AND SO ON—WILL YOU BE ASSUMING COMMAND OF THE LOST LIGHT?
ASSUMING COMMAND...?
I—
—NO.
NO, OF COURSE NOT, ULTRA MAGNUS.
I'M JUST A GUEST— A GRATEFUL GUEST.
IN FACT, PERHAPS YOU COULD GIVE ME A TOUR OF THE SHIP WHILE WE DISCUSS NEXT MOVES...


THE BRIDGE.
...AND THIS IS WHERE WE SPEND MOST OF OUR TIME, FINE-TUNING STRATEGY, REFLECTING ON OUR PROGRESS TO DATE...
...AND DEBATING THE PEDAGOGICAL CONSTRAINTS OF LOGIC, GRAMMAR, AND RHETORIC.
...
HAS SOMEONE BEEN DRAWING ON THE NAVICOMP?
INCOMING MESSAGE, CAPTAIN.
HUH. MORE LIKE A NUISANCE CALL.
STARSCREAM?
WHAT DOES HE WANT?
HOLOGRAM OR NOT, I DON'T LIKE SEEING HIM ON AN AUTOBOT SHIP.
INTERESTING. WE'RE NOT REALLY AN–
OPTIMUS PRIME, ONBOARD THE LOST LIGHT...?
THE NAME'S–
I SUPPOSE YOUR NEW CREWMATES DIDN'T TELL YOU THE NEWS: I'M IN CHARGE OF CYBERTRON NOW. THE FIRST FREELY ELECTED PEACETIME LEADER SINCE... SINCE NOVA PRIME, COME TO THINK OF IT.
YOUR LITTLE PAL, BUMBLEBEE, FAILED.
NOT MY VERDICT, THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S.
ANYWAY. LONG STORY SHORT, I'VE GOT AN... ISSUE. I'D SAY "END OF THE WORLD," BUT THAT WOULD BE ALARMIST.
NOW, I'M NOT SAYING, "COME BACK"–
–PLEASE, WE'RE ALL COUNTING ON YOUR FINDING THE OH-SO-ELUSIVE KNIGHTS OF CYBERTRON–
–BUT YOU HAVE AN EXPERT ON BOARD THAT I'D LIKE TO CONSULT.
I'M UPLOADING A SET OF ENERGY READINGS RELATING TO A DISTURBANCE OVER IACON.
IT LOOKS TO ME THEY INDICATE THAT THE DEAD UNIVERSE– OR SOMETHING THAT RESIDES WITHIN IT– IS BENT ON WRAPPING UP SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS...
I WAS ON ARK-1 WHEN IT WAS DRAWN INTO THE DEAD UNIVERSE—AND THESE READINGS ARE IDENTICAL TO THE ONES I SAW SIX MILLION YEARS AGO IN THE BENZULI EXPANSE.
IF A NEW PORTAL IS OPENING UP OVER CYBERTRON, THE WHOLE PLANET IS AT STAKE.
UNFORTUNATELY, CYCLONUS, I THINK IT'S MUCH WORSE THAN THAT...
...BUT I'D LIKE TO ASK CYCLONUS WHAT HE THINKS.
CYCLONUS...?
LAST YEAR, I LEFT THE FUTURE OF OUR RACE IN THE HANDS OF TWO OF MY MOST TRUSTED FRIENDS.
AND WHILE RODIMUS LED THE CREW OF THE LOST LIGHT IN SEARCH OF THE BEST OF CYBERTRON'S PAST...

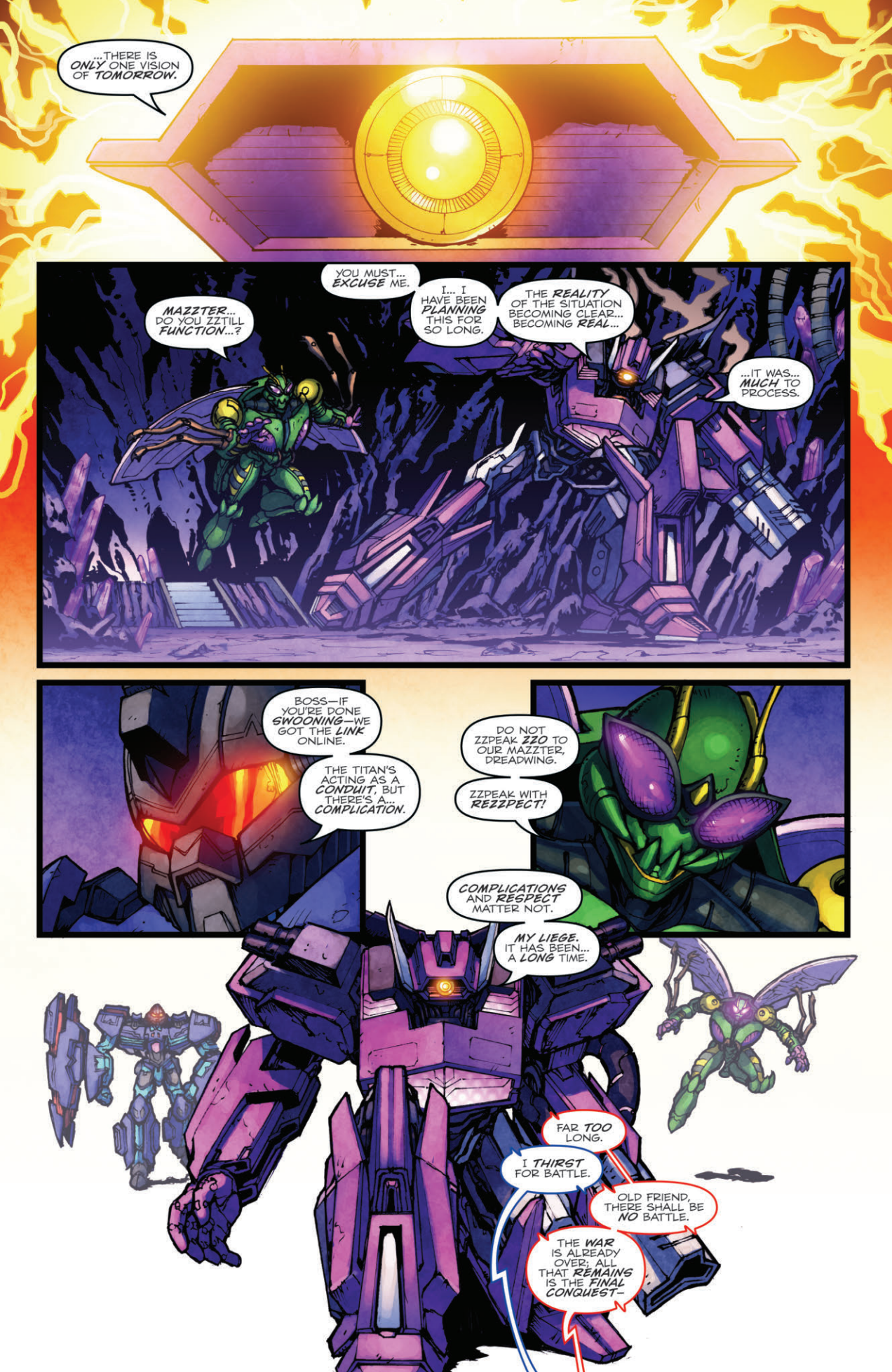
...BUMBLEBEE REMAINED ON THE PLANET, DETERMINED TO FORGE A NEW FUTURE.
BE READY FOR ANYTHING, AUTOBOTS.
BUMBLEBEE— YOU KNOW US DINOBOTS'RE ALWAYS READY TO SMASH.
YEAH? YOU GUYS WANT TO PUNCH A LIGHT ON THE HORIZON?
IRONHIDE, KEEP YOUR LUNKHEADS IN LINE.
THEY AIN'T LUNKHEADS, PROWL. THEY'RE JUST BRAVE.
MOST LUNKHEADS ARE.
IT'S JHIAXUS. HE'S DOING THIS.
ARCEE—
I DON'T CARE IF YOU SAY HE'S OFF-WORLD...

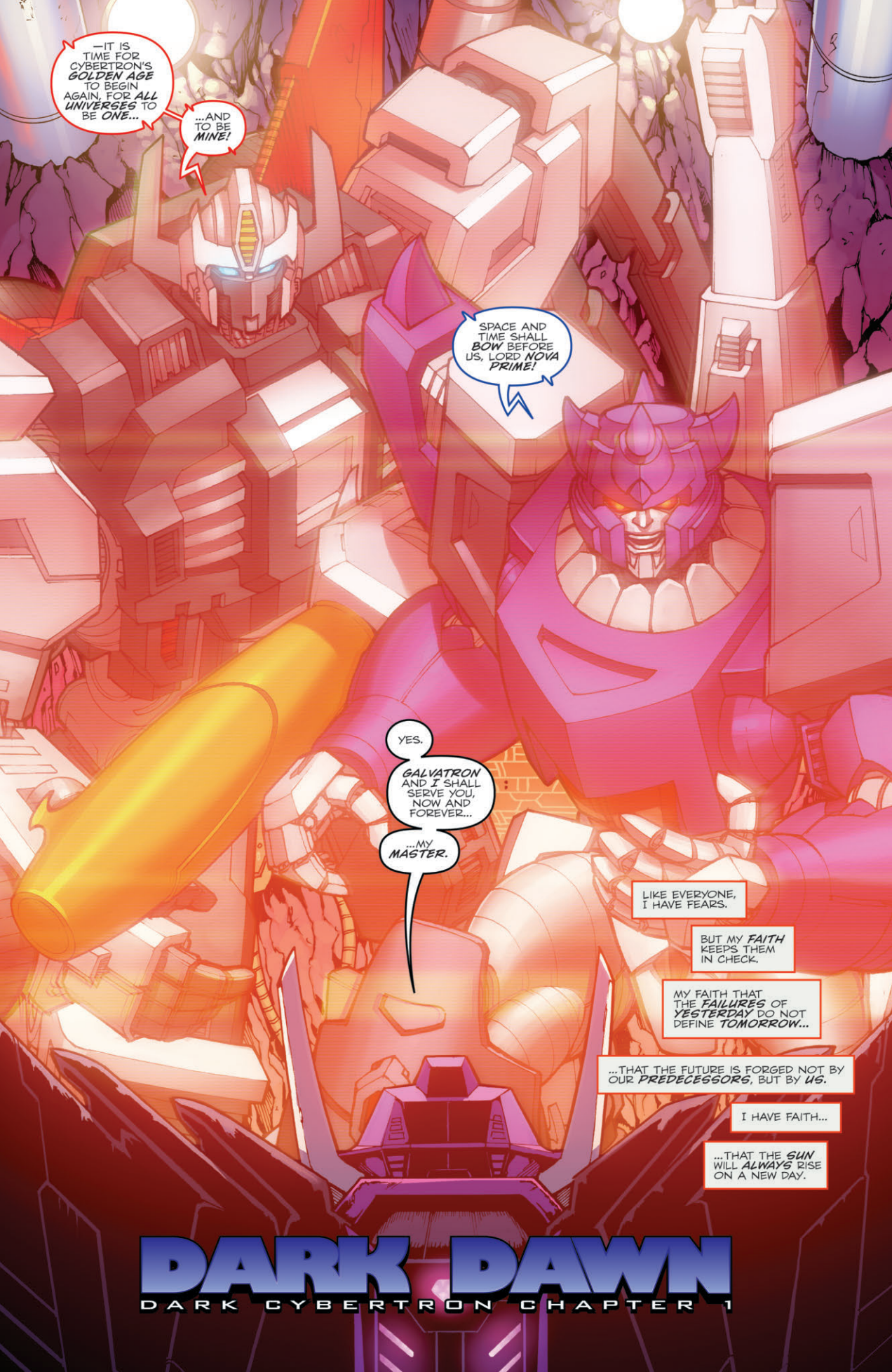
...THIS HAS HIS STENCH ALL OVER IT.
YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT.
AND IF IT IS HIM—IF HE'S REALLY LOOSE AGAIN, TERRORIZING OUR UNIVERSE—
THEN WE GOTTA FIGHT!
YOU STOOD BY, BEE—YOU LET STARSCREAM WALK ALL OVER YOU.
WELL—WE'RE DONE WITH WAITING.
DINOBOTS—ROLL OUT!
FINALLY.
YEAH, WATCHING WAS BORING.
GRRNT.
WHAT—WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
WHO IS THERE TO FIGHT?!
WE HAVE TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS...
WELL, OKAY, THAT HAPPENED.
PROWL, YOU EVER—
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS IS, BUT—PRIMUS FORGIVE ME—I'M STARTING TO AGREE WITH THE DINOBOTS:
IT'D BE NICE TO HAVE SOMEBODY TO—
RUMMRBBBLL
—PUNCH.
I GUESS, IF NOTHING ELSE—

—AT LEAST I LIVED TO SEE *PROWL* PUT HIS *FOOT* IN HIS *MOUTH*.



EVERYTHING... FALLS.
EVERYTHING FALLS INTO PLACE.
AN ENDLESS CHAIN.
NO, A CIRCLE.
A CIRCLE WITHIN A CIRCLE WITHIN THE SAME CIRCLE...
...ENDLESS AND FOREVER.
I SEE THE FUTURE.
I SPEAK NOT IN METAPHOR.
I SPEAK NOT OF MYSTICISM.
I SPEAK WITH LOGIC.
THE TITAN HAS ARRIVED...
...AND IN THE COLD GAZE OF LOGIC...


...THERE IS ONLY ONE VISION OF TOMORROW.
MAZZTER... DO YOU ZZTILL FUNCTION...?
YOU MUST... EXCUSE ME.
I... I HAVE BEEN PLANNING THIS FOR SO LONG.
THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION BECOMING CLEAR... BECOMING REAL...
...IT WAS... MUCH TO PROCESS.
BOSS—IF YOU'RE DONE SWOONING—WE GOT THE LINK ONLINE.
THE TITAN'S ACTING AS A CONDUIT, BUT THERE'S A... COMPLICATION.
DO NOT ZZPEAK ZZO TO OUR MAZZTER, DREADWING.
ZZPEAK WITH REZZPECT!
COMPLICATIONS AND RESPECT MATTER NOT.
MY LIEGE. IT HAS BEEN... A LONG TIME.
FAR TOO LONG.
I THIRST FOR BATTLE.
OLD FRIEND, THERE SHALL BE NO BATTLE.
THE WAR IS ALREADY OVER; ALL THAT REMAINS IS THE FINAL CONQUEST—

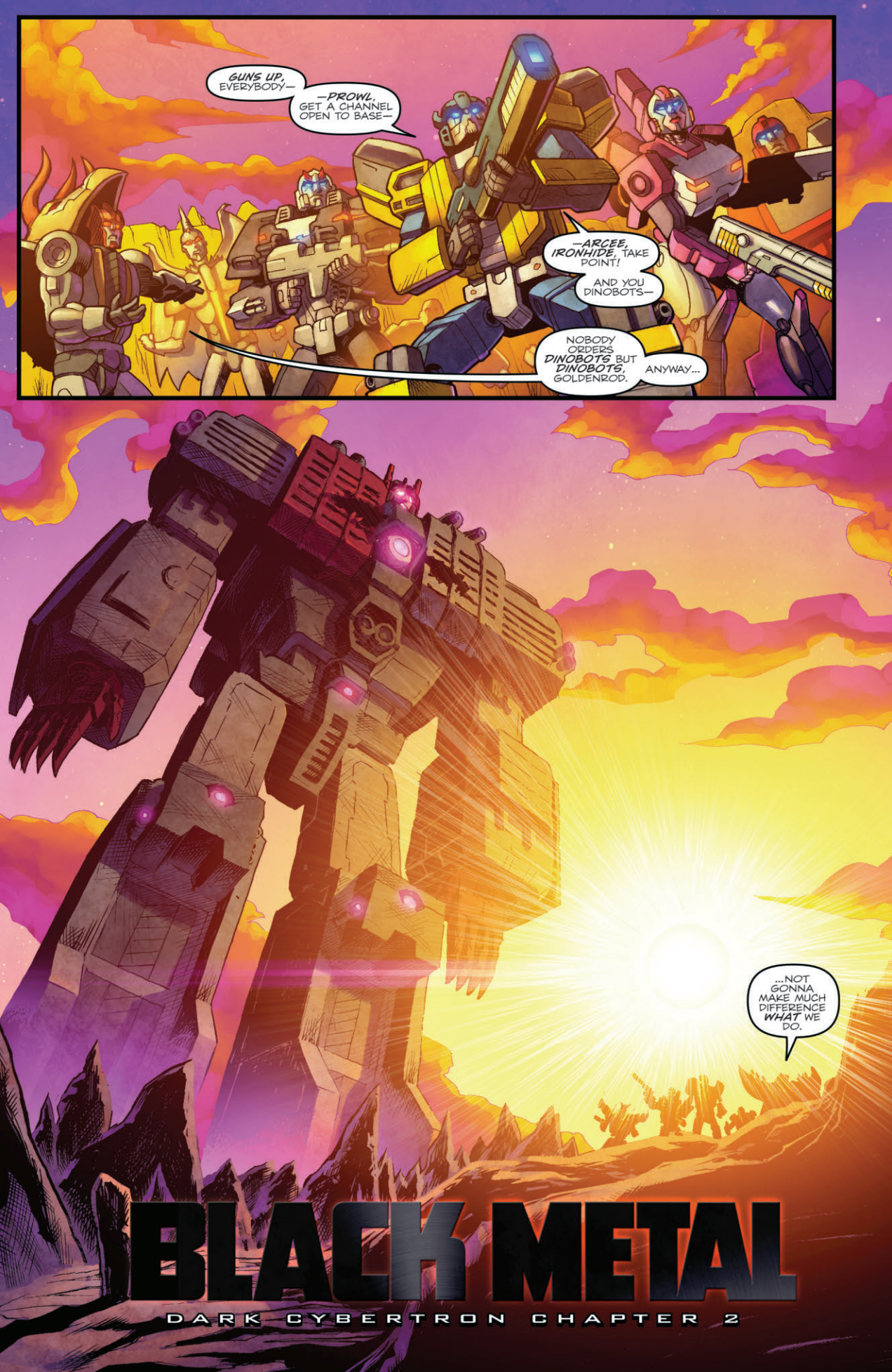

—IT IS TIME FOR CYBERTRON'S GOLDEN AGE TO BEGIN AGAIN, FOR ALL UNIVERSES TO BE ONE...
...AND TO BE MINE!
SPACE AND TIME SHALL BOW BEFORE US, LORD NOVA PRIME!
YES.
GALVATRON AND I SHALL SERVE YOU, NOW AND FOREVER...
...MY MASTER.
LIKE EVERYONE, I HAVE FEARS.
BUT MY FAITH KEEPS THEM IN CHECK.
MY FAITH THAT THE FAILURES OF YESTERDAY DO NOT DEFINE TOMORROW...
...THAT THE FUTURE IS FORGED NOT BY OUR PREDECESSORS, BUT BY US.
I HAVE FAITH...
...THAT THE SUN WILL ALWAYS RISE ON A NEW DAY.
DARK DAWN
DARK CYBERTRON CHAPTER 1

Cover by: PHIL JIMENEZ • Colors by: ROMULO FAJARDO, JR.

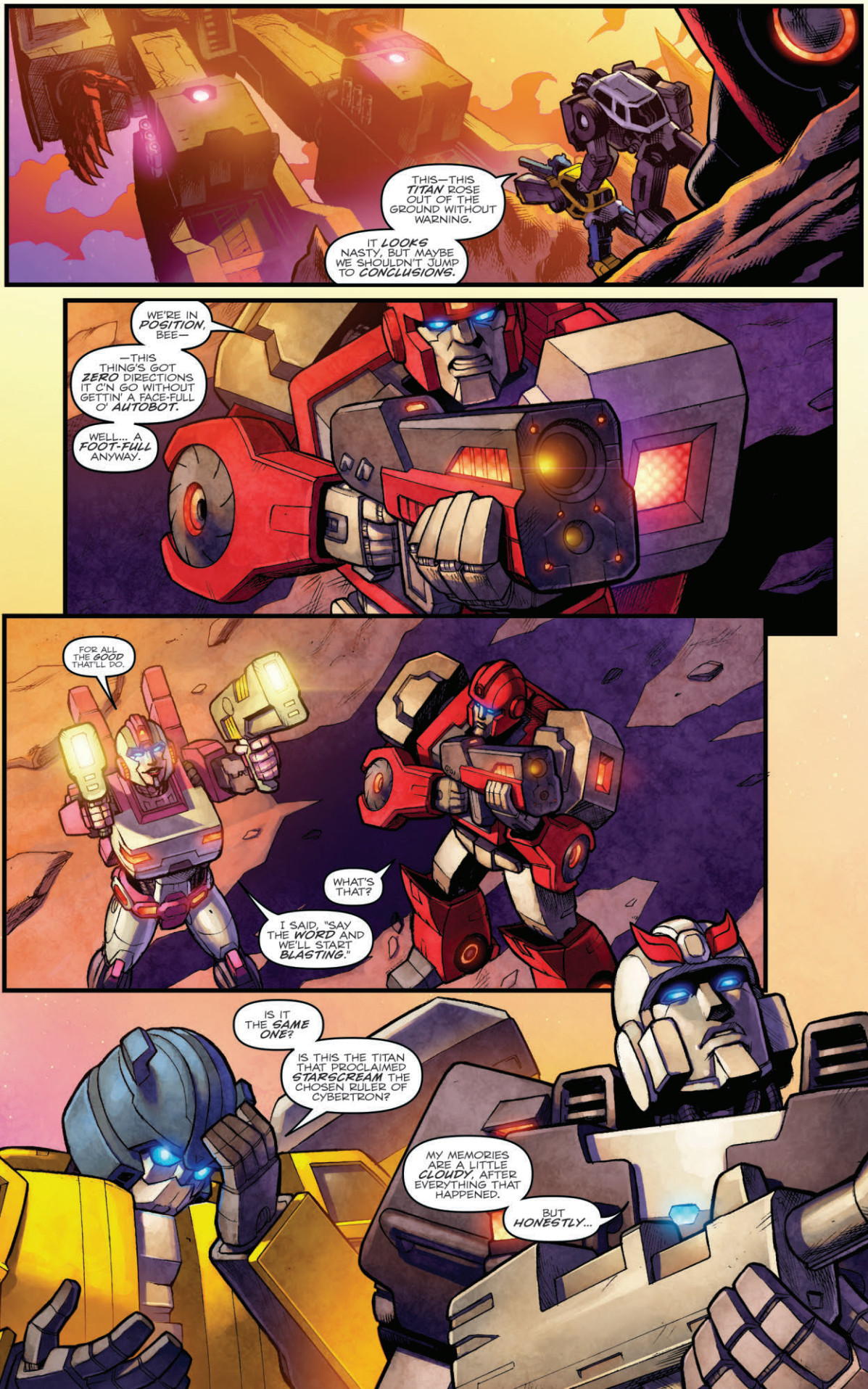
CHAPTER 2

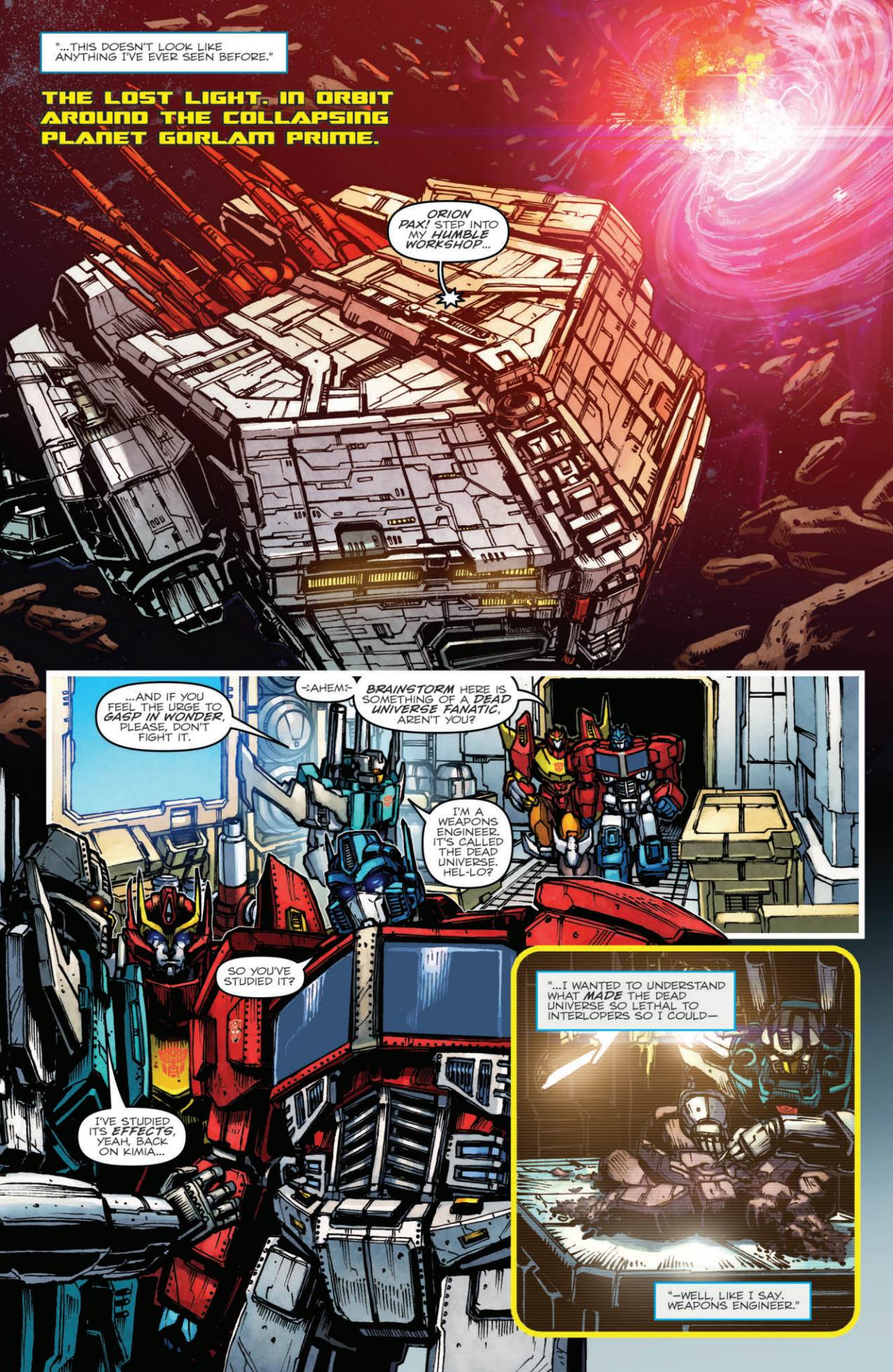
Art by: ATILIO ROJO, JAMES RAIZ, and LIVIO RAMONDELLI • Colors by: JOSH PEREZ and LIVIO RAMONDELLI
Letters by: GILBERTO LAZCANO

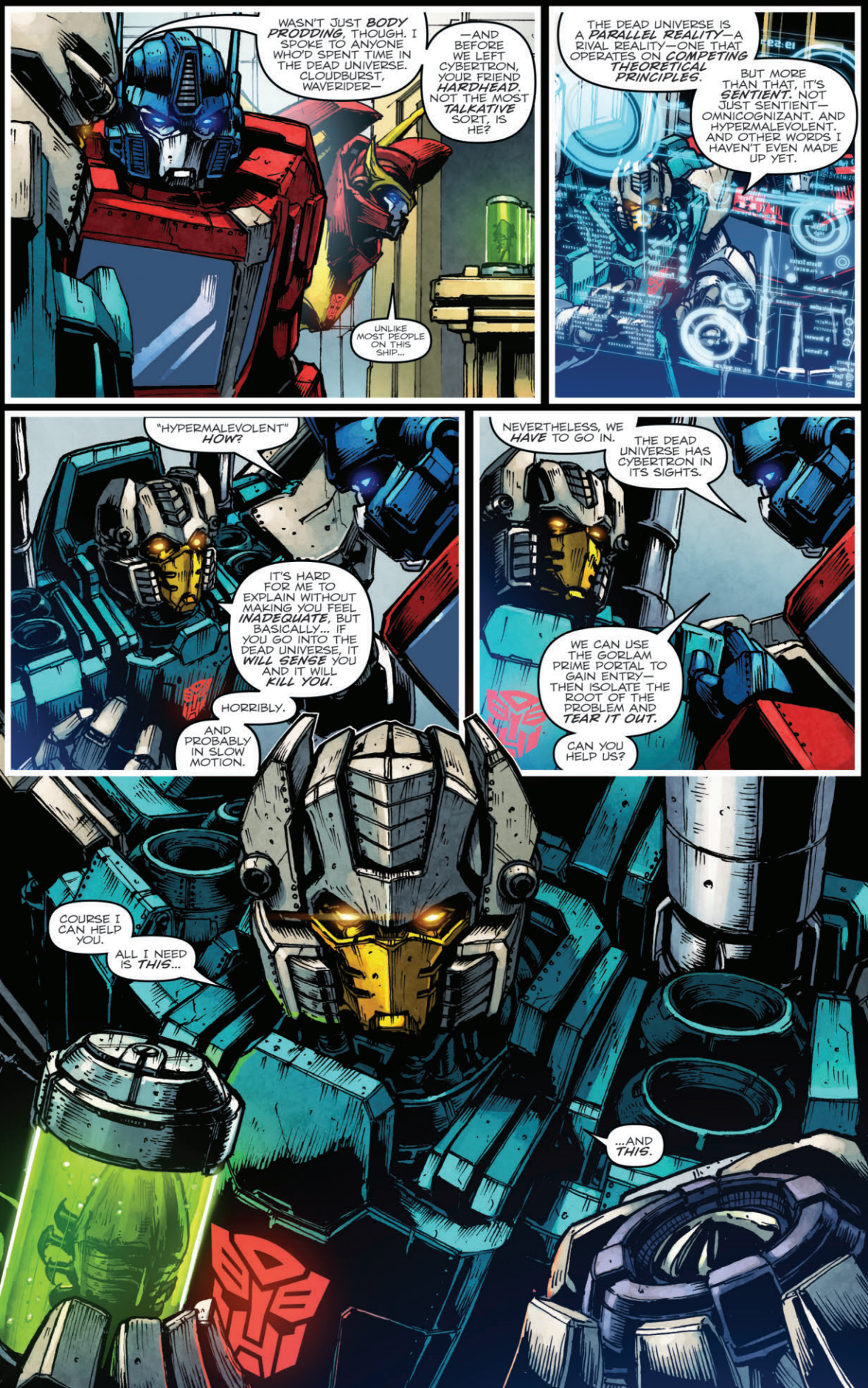
Cover by: CASEY W. COLLER • Colors by: JOANA LAFUENTE

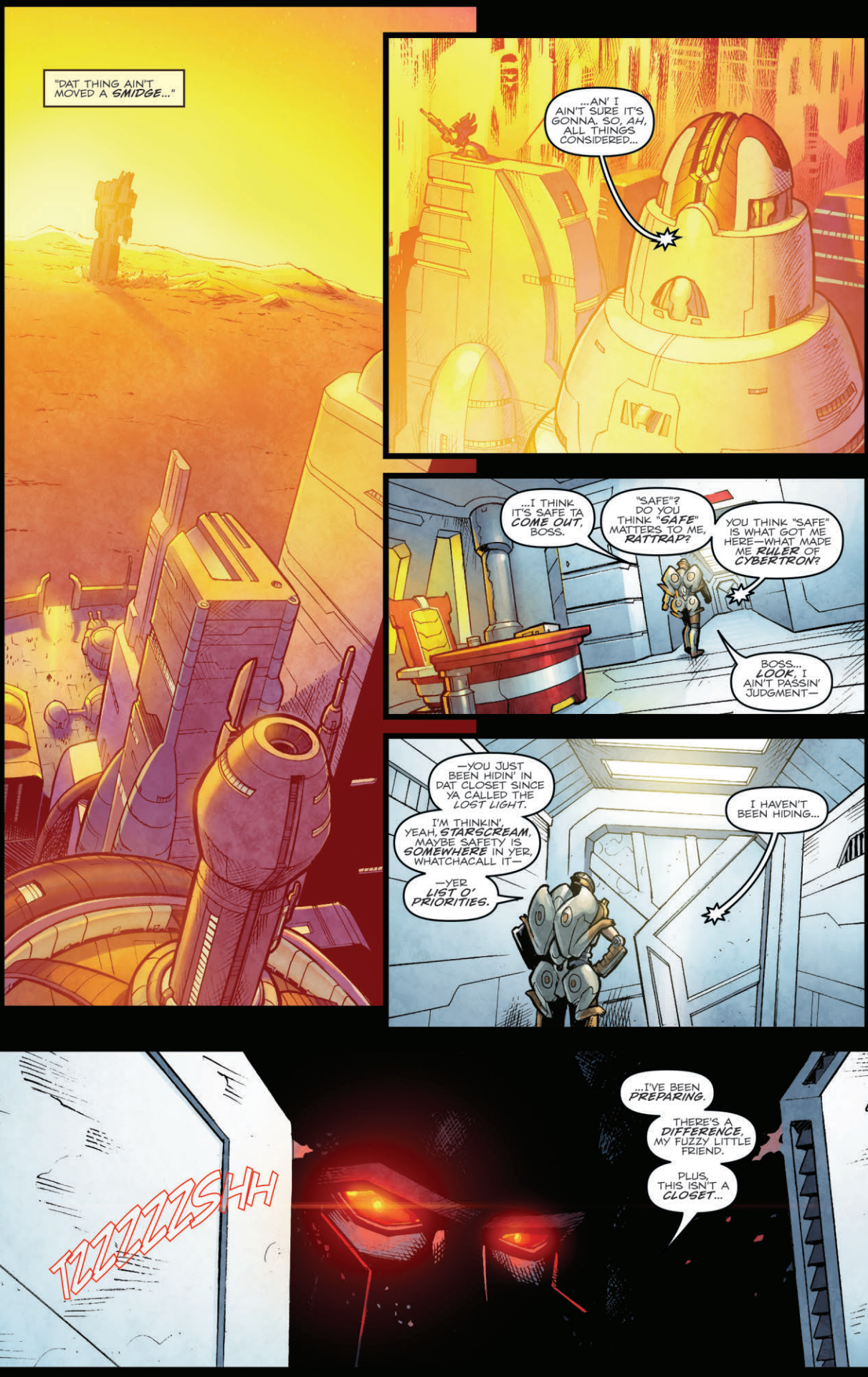

GUNS UP, EVERYBODY—
—PROWL, GET A CHANNEL OPEN TO BASE—
—ARCEE, IRONHIDE, TAKE POINT!
AND YOU DINOBOTS—
NOBODY ORDERS DINOBOTS BUT DINOBOTS, GOLDENROD.
ANYWAY...
...NOT GONNA MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE WHAT WE DO.
BLACK METAL
DARK CYBERTRON CHAPTER 2

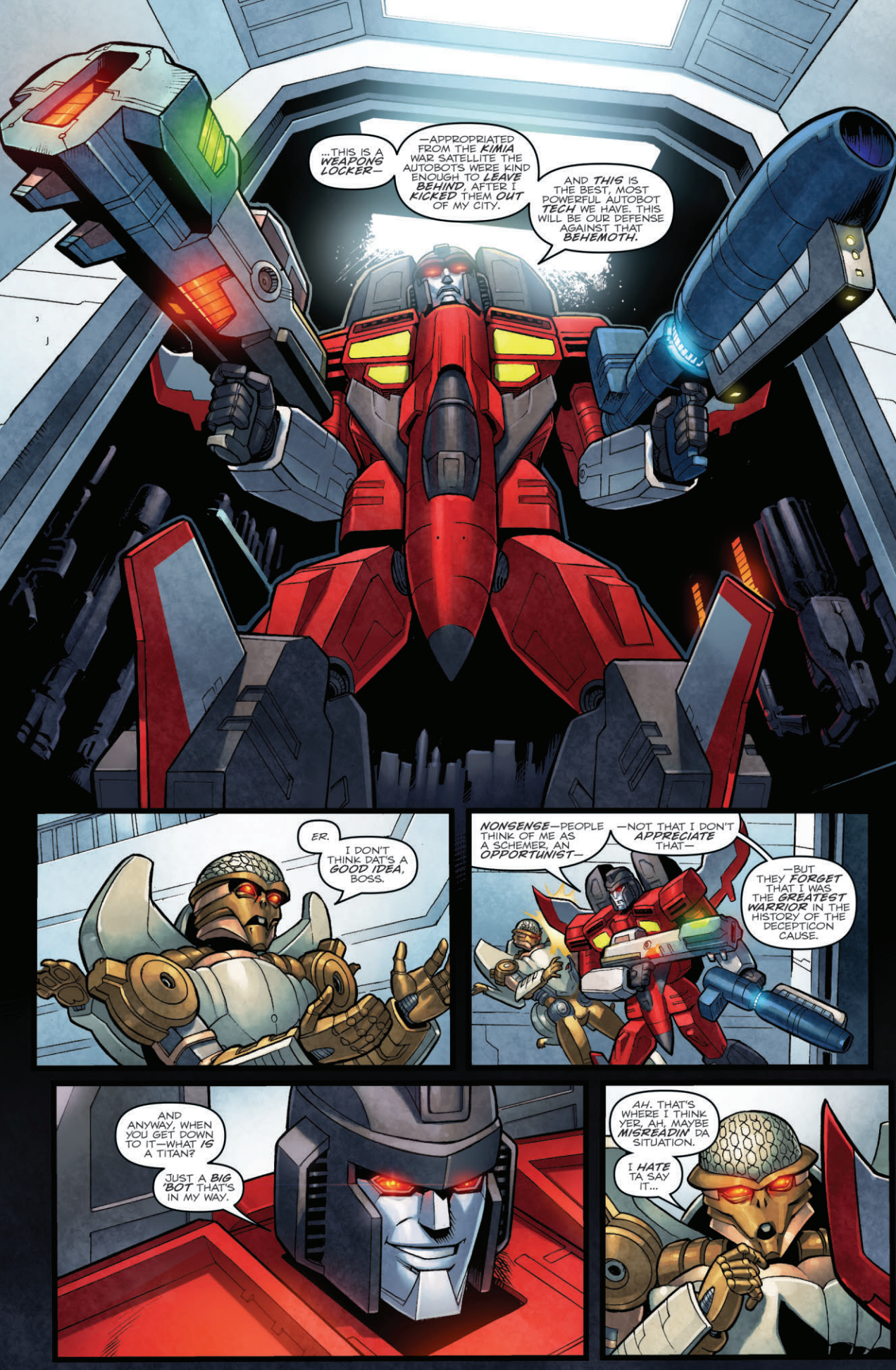
NO. WHAT YOU DO IS THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE.
TAKE POINT AND GET YOUR TROOPS IN A PERIMETER AROUND THAT GIANT—IF YOU WANT TO BE AN AUTOBOT.
AND IF YOU DON'T WANT THAT—THEN GET THE HELL OFF MY BATTLEFIELD.
YOU HEARD BUMBLEBEE. TIME TO GET BLASTED. I WAS TIRED OF ALL HIS WHINING, ANYWAY.
SWOOP, YOU'RE OUR EYES IN THE SKY—CALL OUR SHOTS.
SNARL, FLANK THE BIG GUY.
SLUDGE—STAY WITH ME.
WHATEVER THIS GIANT IS, IT'S NOT MOVING.
NOTHING THREATENING, NOTHING...
...WELL, NOTHING ANYTHING.
IT'S CALLED A TITAN. AND IT'S BLOCKING TRANSMISSIONS BEYOND DIRECT LINE OF SIGHT. I CAN'T RAISE BASE AT ALL.
SLUDGE—GET BACK THERE. BRING THE OTHERS.

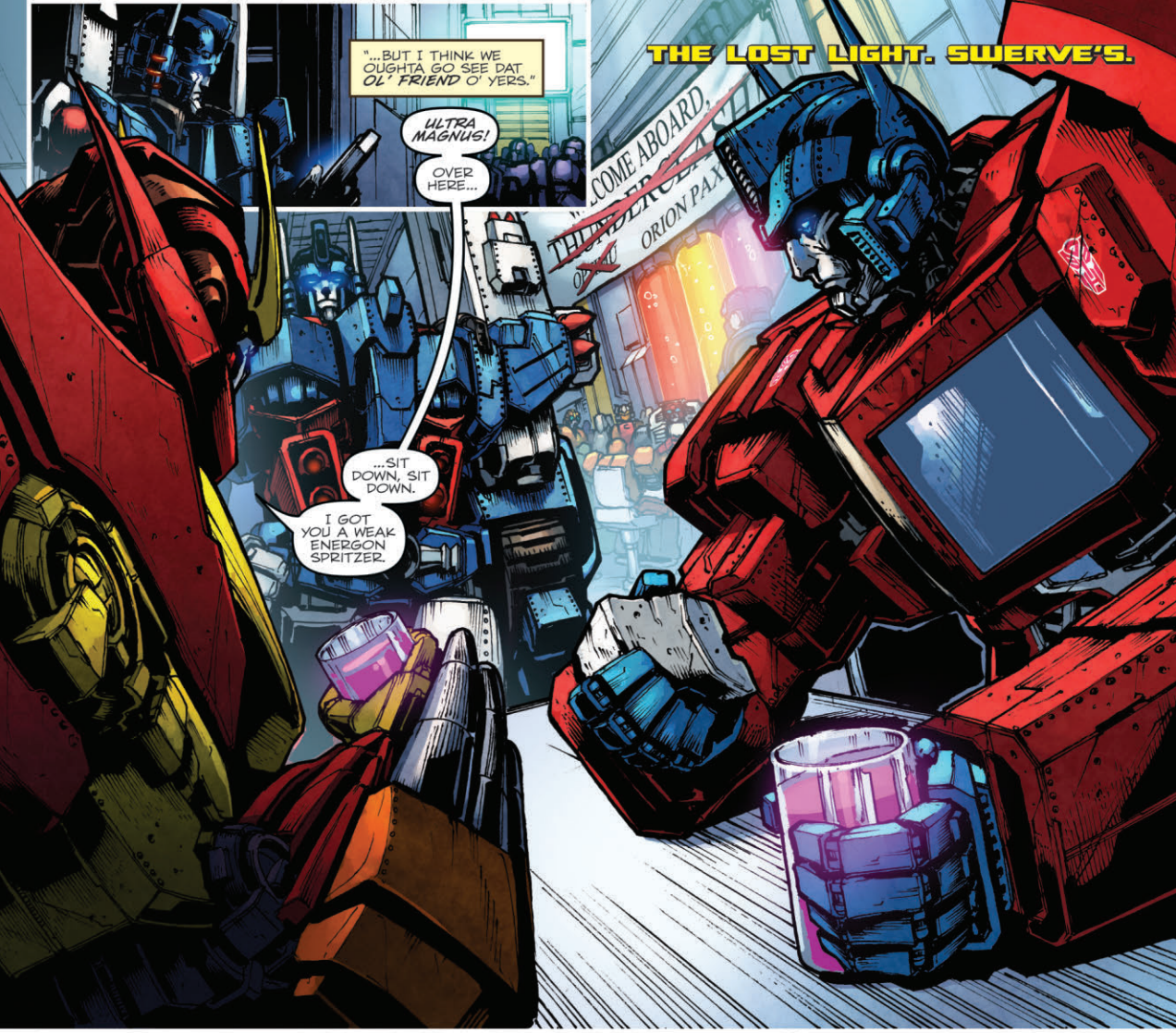

THIS—THIS TITAN ROSE OUT OF THE GROUND WITHOUT WARNING.
IT LOOKS NASTY, BUT MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS.
WE'RE IN POSITION, BEE—
—THIS THING'S GOT ZERO DIRECTIONS IT C'N GO WITHOUT GETTIN' A FACE-FULL O' AUTOBOT.
WELL... A FOOT-FULL ANYWAY.
FOR ALL THE GOOD THAT'LL DO.
WHAT'S THAT?
I SAID, "SAY THE WORD AND WE'LL START BLASTING."
IS IT THE SAME ONE?
IS THIS THE TITAN THAT PROCLAIMED STARSCREAM THE CHOSEN RULER OF CYBERTRON?
MY MEMORIES ARE A LITTLE CLOUDY, AFTER EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED.
BUT HONESTLY...


"...THIS DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ANYTHING I'VE EVER SEEN BEFORE."
THE LOST LIGHT, IN ORBIT AROUND THE COLLAPSING PLANET GORLAM PRIME.
ORION PAX! STEP INTO MY HUMBLE WORKSHOP...
...AND IF YOU FEEL THE URGE TO GASP IN WONDER, PLEASE, DON'T FIGHT IT.
-AHEM- BRAINSTORM HERE IS SOMETHING OF A DEAD UNIVERSE FANATIC, AREN'T YOU?
I'M A WEAPONS ENGINEER. IT'S CALLED THE DEAD UNIVERSE. HEL-LO?
SO YOU'VE STUDIED IT?
I'VE STUDIED ITS EFFECTS, YEAH, BACK ON KIMIA...
"...I WANTED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT MADE THE DEAD UNIVERSE SO LETHAL TO INTERLOPERS SO I COULD—
"—WELL, LIKE I SAY. WEAPONS ENGINEER."


WASN'T JUST BODY PRODDING, THOUGH. I SPOKE TO ANYONE WHO'D SPENT TIME IN THE DEAD UNIVERSE. CLOUDBURST, WAVERIDER—
—AND BEFORE WE LEFT CYBERTRON, YOUR FRIEND HARDHEAD. NOT THE MOST TALKATIVE SORT, IS HE?
UNLIKE MOST PEOPLE ON THIS SHIP...
THE DEAD UNIVERSE IS A PARALLEL REALITY—A RIVAL REALITY—ONE THAT OPERATES ON COMPETING THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES.
BUT MORE THAN THAT, IT'S SENTIENT. NOT JUST SENTIENT—OMNICOGNIZANT. AND HYPERMALEVOLENT. AND OTHER WORDS I HAVEN'T EVEN MADE UP YET.
"HYPERMALEVOLENT" HOW?
IT'S HARD FOR ME TO EXPLAIN WITHOUT MAKING YOU FEEL INADEQUATE, BUT BASICALLY... IF YOU GO INTO THE DEAD UNIVERSE, IT WILL SENSE YOU AND IT WILL KILL YOU.
HORRIBLY.
AND PROBABLY IN SLOW MOTION.
NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE TO GO IN.
THE DEAD UNIVERSE HAS CYBERTRON IN ITS SIGHTS.
WE CAN USE THE GORLAM PRIME PORTAL TO GAIN ENTRY—THEN ISOLATE THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM AND TEAR IT OUT.
CAN YOU HELP US?
COURSE I CAN HELP YOU.
ALL I NEED IS THIS...
...AND THIS.


"DAT THING AIN'T MOVED A SMIDGE..."
...AN' I AIN'T SURE IT'S GONNA. SO, AH, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED...
...I THINK IT'S SAFE TA COME OUT, BOSS.
"SAFE"? DO YOU THINK "SAFE" MATTERS TO ME, RATTRAP?
YOU THINK "SAFE" IS WHAT GOT ME HERE—WHAT MADE ME RULER OF CYBERTRON?
BOSS... LOOK, I AIN'T PASSIN' JUDGMENT—
—YOU JUST BEEN HIDIN' IN DAT CLOSET SINCE YA CALLED THE LOST LIGHT.
I'M THINKIN', YEAH, STARSCREAM, MAYBE SAFETY IS SOMEWHERE IN YER, WHATCHACALL IT—
—YER LIST O' PRIORITIES.
I HAVEN'T BEEN HIDING...
TZZZZZSHH
...I'VE BEEN PREPARING.
THERE'S A DIFFERENCE, MY FUZZY LITTLE FRIEND.
PLUS, THIS ISN'T A CLOSET...


...THIS IS A WEAPONS LOCKER—
—APPROPRIATED FROM THE KIMIA WAR SATELLITE THE AUTOBOTS WERE KIND ENOUGH TO LEAVE BEHIND, AFTER I KICKED THEM OUT OF MY CITY.
AND THIS IS THE BEST, MOST POWERFUL AUTOBOT TECH WE HAVE. THIS WILL BE OUR DEFENSE AGAINST THAT BEHEMOTH.
ER.
I DON'T THINK DAT'S A GOOD IDEA, BOSS.
NONSENSE—PEOPLE THINK OF ME AS A SCHEMER, AN OPPORTUNIST—
—NOT THAT I DON'T APPRECIATE THAT—
—BUT THEY FORGET THAT I WAS THE GREATEST WARRIOR IN THE HISTORY OF THE DECEPTICON CAUSE.
AND ANYWAY, WHEN YOU GET DOWN TO IT—WHAT IS A TITAN?
JUST A BIG 'BOT THAT'S IN MY WAY.
AH. THAT'S WHERE I THINK YER AH, MAYBE MISREADIN' DA SITUATION.
I HATE TA SAY IT...


"...BUT I THINK WE OUGHTA GO SEE DAT OL' FRIEND O' YERS."
ULTRA MAGNUS!
OVER HERE...
...SIT DOWN, SIT DOWN.
I GOT YOU A WEAK ENERGON SPRITZER.
THE LOST LIGHT. SWERVE'S.
ORION PAX

OH. THANK YOU.
WHAT'S THE LATEST?
GORLAM PRIME'S RATE OF DECAY IS HOLDING STEADY, WHICH MEANS THAT THE DEAD UNIVERSE PORTAL WILL STAY OPEN FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER, UM...
...I'M SORRY, BUT I REALLY THINK WE SHOULD BE HAVING THIS CONVERSATION SOMEWHERE MORE PRIVATE.
ORION?

IT'S UP TO RODIMUS.

WE'RE WAITING FOR BRAINSTORM TO WORK HIS MAGIC. AND I'D RATHER WAIT DOWN HERE—WITH MY MEN—THAN SHUT MYSELF AWAY.
HM. I SUPPOSE IT SHOWS THE CREW THAT WE'RE NOT PANICKING, WHICH IS—
—SWERVE!

WHAT? WHAT HAVE I DONE?
YOU'RE TAKING PHOTOS.
OPTIMUS PRIME, RODIMUS, AND ULTRA MAGNUS. AT A TABLE. IN MY BAR. TOO RIGHT, I'M TAKING PHOTOS.

SOOOO...
...ANYONE ELSE FEELING IT?
BACK OF THE NECK? TIPS OF YOUR FINGERS? THAT FEELING YOU GET WHEN THINGS ARE GONNA... YOU KNOW.
WHEN THINGS ARE GONNA START *UNRAVELING.*

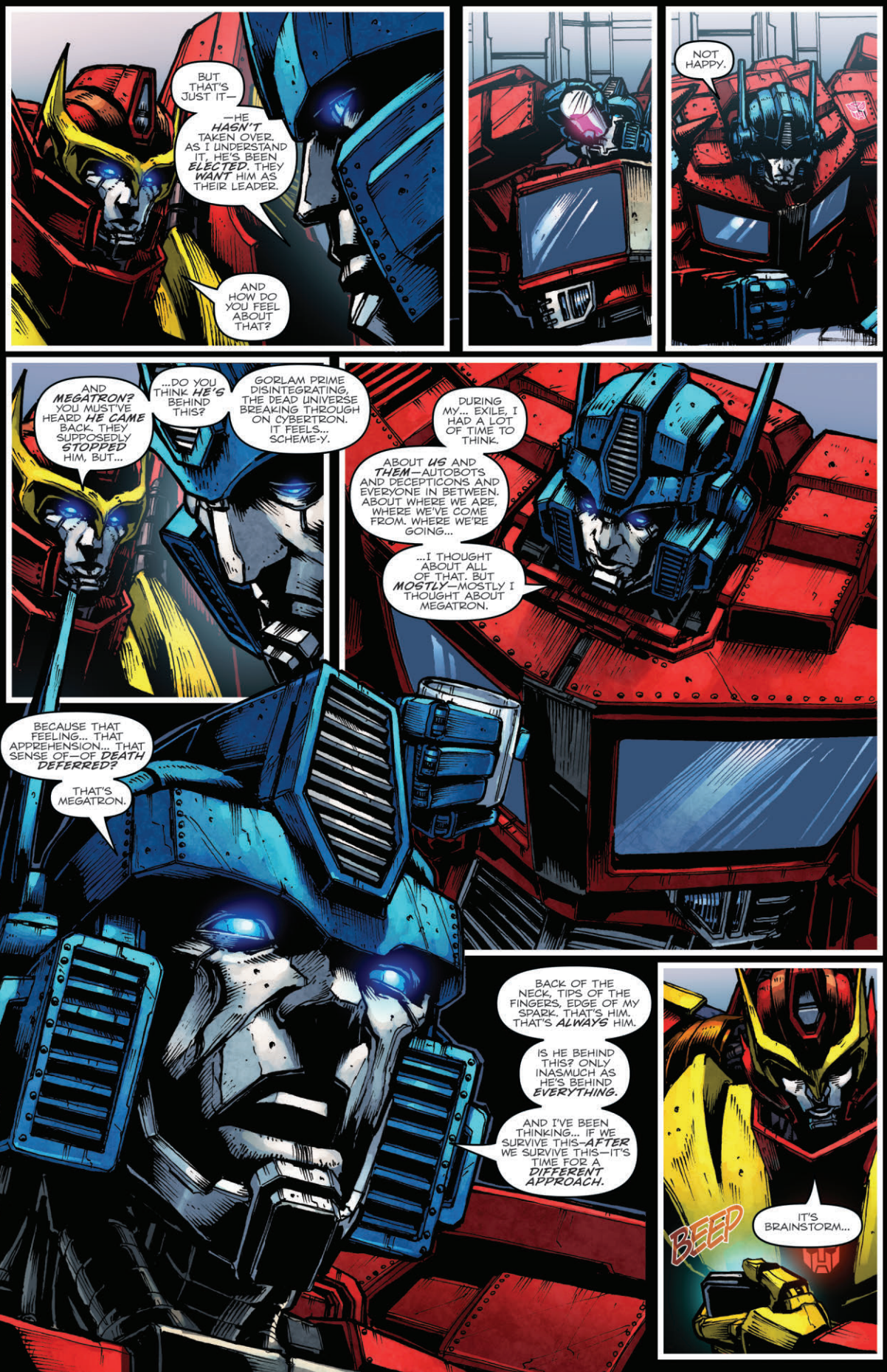
THINGS ARE *ALWAYS* UNRAVELING.
...
I DON'T EVEN—
—I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER WHEN THEY WERE EVER FULLY *RAVELED.*

FUEL PUMP. PIT OF THE FUEL PUMP—THAT'S WHERE I FEEL IT. THAT SENSE OF... *FOREBODING.* LIKE WE'RE ON THE BRINK.
BUT IT'S NOT JUST US. IT'S *EVERYONE.*
THE 'BOT WITH THE—AT THE BAR. THE 'BOT WITH THE CAMERA. SWERVE. HE FEELS IT. AND *HARDHEAD* AND *WHEELIE* AND *GARNAK.*
WE'VE ALL JUST LEARNED TO *HIDE* IT.

YES, BUT THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT *WE'RE* THE ONES WHO HAVE TO FIX THINGS.
WHATEVER'S HAPPENING, WE HAVE TO STOP IT.
IT RESTS WITH *US*—WITH HIGH COMMAND. WITH YOU TWO, AND ME, AND—AND *BUMBLEBEE.*
AND PROWL.

YEAH, HIM TOO.

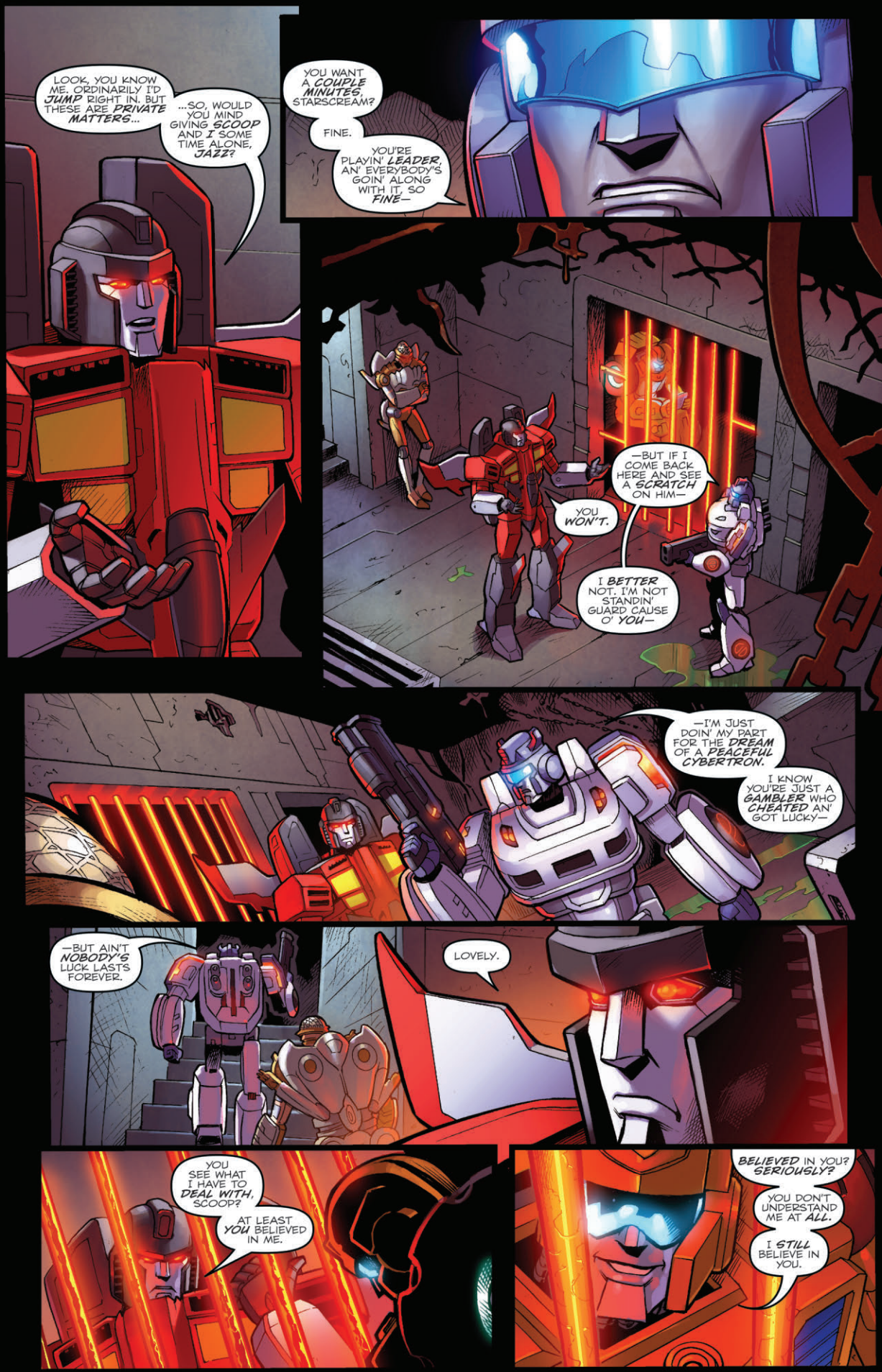
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF EVENTS ON CYBERTRON? IF WE'D KNOWN STARSCREAM WAS GOING TO *TAKE OVER*, WE'D HAVE...
...WHAT WOULD WE HAVE DONE, RODIMUS?
SOMETHING.
WE'D HAVE DONE *SOMETHING.*

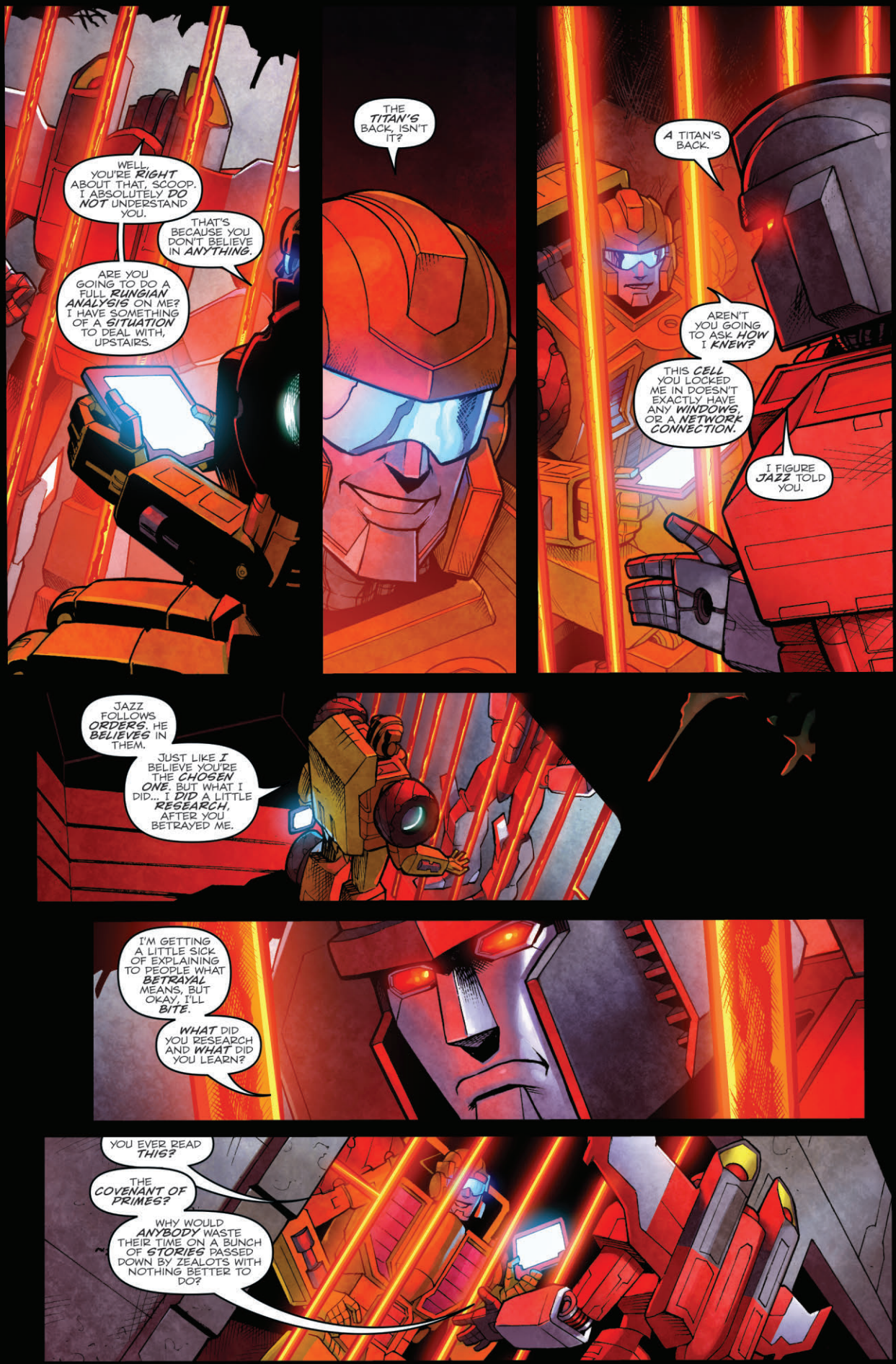

BUT THAT'S JUST IT—
—HE *HASN'T* TAKEN OVER. AS I UNDERSTAND IT, HE'S BEEN *ELECTED*. THEY *WANT* HIM AS THEIR LEADER.
AND HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?
NOT HAPPY.
AND *MEGATRON?* YOU MUST'VE HEARD *HE CAME* BACK. THEY SUPPOSEDLY *STOPPED* HIM, BUT...
...DO YOU THINK *HE'S* BEHIND THIS?
GORLAM PRIME DISINTEGRATING, THE DEAD UNIVERSE BREAKING THROUGH ON CYBERTRON. IT FEELS... SCHEME-Y.
DURING MY... EXILE, I HAD A LOT OF TIME TO THINK.
ABOUT *US* AND *THEM*—AUTOBOTS AND DECEPTICONS AND EVERYONE IN BETWEEN. ABOUT WHERE WE ARE, WHERE WE'VE COME FROM. WHERE WE'RE GOING...
...I THOUGHT ABOUT ALL OF THAT. BUT *MOSTLY*—MOSTLY I THOUGHT ABOUT MEGATRON.
BECAUSE THAT FEELING... THAT APPREHENSION... THAT SENSE OF—OF *DEATH DEFERRED?*
THAT'S MEGATRON.
BACK OF THE NECK, TIPS OF THE FINGERS, EDGE OF MY SPARK. THAT'S HIM. THAT'S *ALWAYS* HIM.
IS HE BEHIND THIS? ONLY INASMUCH AS HE'S BEHIND *EVERYTHING.*
AND I'VE BEEN THINKING... IF WE SURVIVE THIS—*AFTER* WE SURVIVE THIS—IT'S TIME FOR A *DIFFERENT APPROACH.*
BEEP
IT'S BRAINSTORM...

"...HE SAYS HE'S READY FOR OUR FITTING."
I'M... I'M STRUGGLING TO BE IMPRESSED.
YOU WANT A SUIT OF POLYDERMAL ARMOR? FINE—JUST GIVE ME MY OLD WORKSHOP AND ABOUT SIX MONTHS' NOTICE.
IT'S A FORCEFIELD GENERATOR.
SPECIAL FORCEFIELDS—LACED WITH CYBERWRAITH VENOM. JUST ENOUGH TO TRICK THE DEAD UNIVERSE INTO THINKING THAT YOU BELONG THERE.
LACED WITH WHAT?
AH, NOW—
—THIS IS A CYBERWRAITH—A DEAD UNIVERSE PARASITE. PHASES THROUGH BODIES TO GET TO THE SPARK. I FOUND HIM INSIDE A DEAD SWEEP.
I'VE GOT ENOUGH VENOM FOR A COUPLE MORE FORCEFIELDS, SO...
"...YOU MIGHT WANT TO GO ON A RECRUITMENT DRIVE."
YES.
YES, OF COURSE I'LL COME.
ARE YOU SURE? YOU HESITATED.
I SAID I'LL COME.
YOU SPENT SIX MILLION YEARS IN THE DEAD UNIVERSE, CYCLONUS. YOU KNOW IT BETTER THAN ANY OF US. BUT IF YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT GOING BACK...
HANDS UP IF YOU'RE A COWARD, RIGHT, CYCLONUS?

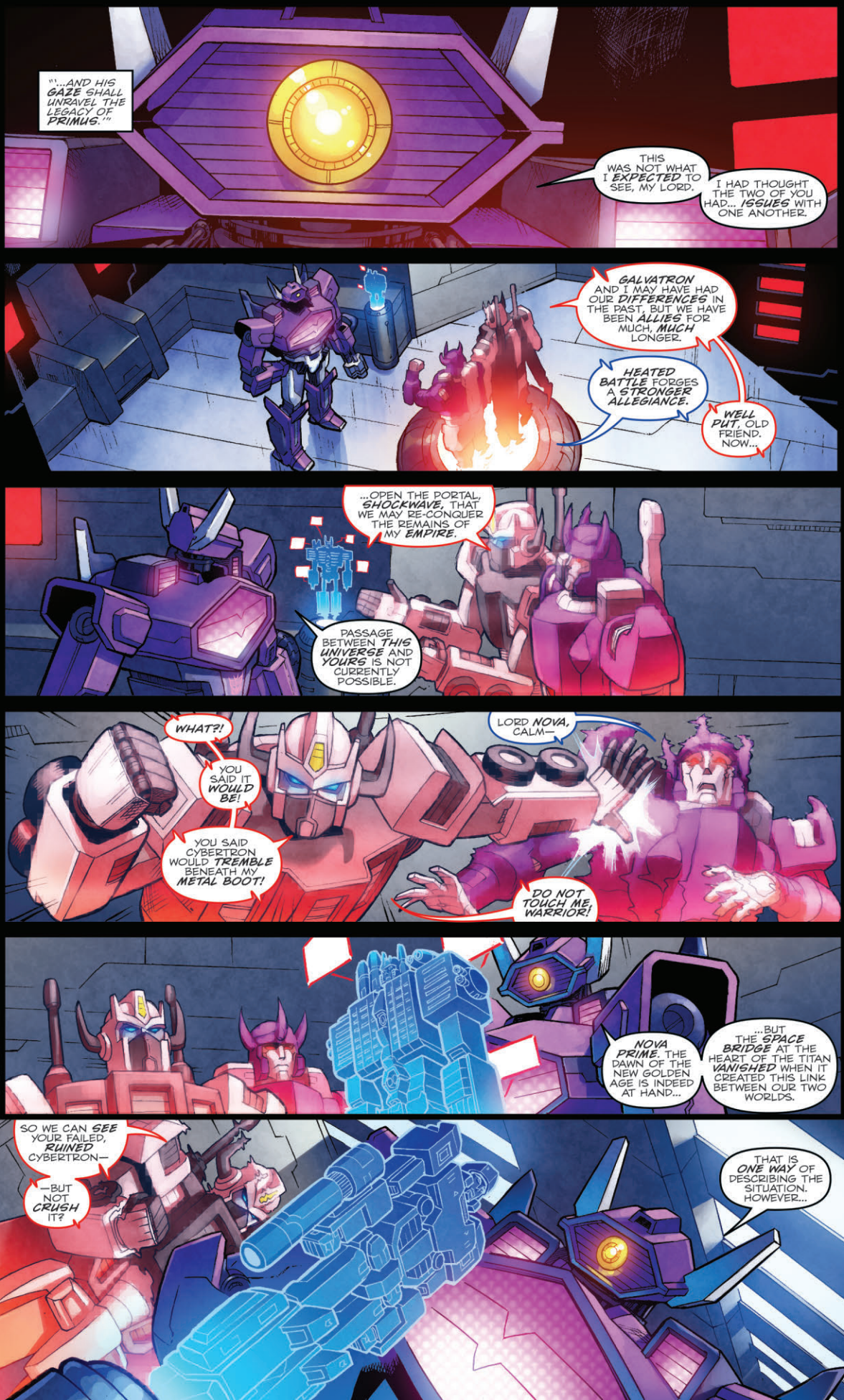
OOOOH!
FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!
NO ONE'S—
—NO ONE'S FIGHTING ANYONE, WHIRL.
FIGHT!
FIGHT?
OH, COME ON! HARDHEAD JUST CALLED YOU A COWARD! AS A BARE MINIMUM YOU SHOULD PROMISE TO KILL HIM WHEN HE LEAST EXPECTS IT!
ORION? RODIMUS? WE'RE IN POSITION—
—ANY CLOSER AND WE'LL ALL GET SUCKED IN.
IT LOOKS AS IF THIS IS WHERE WE PART COMPANY.
WHEELIE, GARNAK—IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE TRAVELING WITH YOU.
FIND THE ENEMY, ATTACK—BUT PLEASE—PROMISE TO COME BACK!
NOT GOING WITH THEM, BRAINSTORM?
CAN'T.
I'M ALLERGIC TO HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS.

READY?
ER—
—GIMME A SEC.
BE HONEST—IS THIS ABOUT BEING LEFT BEHIND, OR ABOUT BEING *LEFT IN CHARGE*?
I'M NOT A LEADER, RODIMUS. I HAVEN'T GOT—WHATEVER IT IS THAT YOU HAVE. THAT EXTRA SOMETHING. I HAVEN'T GOT THAT.
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT I'VE GOT?
THAT.
A FORCEFIELD GENERATOR IN ONE PALM AND *THAT* IN THE OTHER.
OKAY?
SO DON'T TELL ME THAT YOU CAN'T DO MY JOB, BECAUSE YOU *CAN* DO MY JOB—PROBABLY BETTER THAN I CAN.
GARNAK AND WHEELIE ARE GONNA TAKE THE *SKYROLLER* AND WAIT FOR US TO COME BACK FROM THE DEAD UNIVERSE.
I NEED *YOU* TO TAKE THE LOST LIGHT AND *FIND JHIAXUS.* ORION'S CONVINCED HE'S PART OF THIS. GARNAK WILL GIVE YOU HIS FLIGHT SIGNATURE.
WE'RE PLAYING TO OUR STRENGTHS HERE: YOU'RE CHASING A *WAR CRIMINAL*...
"...AND I'M JUMPING HEADLONG INTO THE UNKNOWN."


LOOK, YOU KNOW ME. ORDINARILY I'D JUMP RIGHT IN. BUT THESE ARE PRIVATE MATTERS...
...SO, WOULD YOU MIND GIVING SCOOP AND I SOME TIME ALONE, JAZZ?
YOU WANT A COUPLE MINUTES, STARSCREAM?
FINE.
YOU'RE PLAYIN' LEADER, AN' EVERYBODY'S GOIN' ALONG WITH IT, SO FINE—
—BUT IF I COME BACK HERE AND SEE A SCRATCH ON HIM—
YOU WON'T.
I BETTER NOT. I'M NOT STANDIN' GUARD CAUSE O' YOU—
—I'M JUST DOIN' MY PART FOR THE DREAM OF A PEACEFUL CYBERTRON.
I KNOW YOU'RE JUST A GAMBLER WHO CHEATED AN' GOT LUCKY—
—BUT AIN'T NOBODY'S LUCK LASTS FOREVER.
LOVELY.
YOU SEE WHAT I HAVE TO DEAL WITH, SCOOP?
AT LEAST YOU BELIEVED IN ME.
BELIEVED IN YOU? SERIOUSLY?
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ME AT ALL.
I STILL BELIEVE IN YOU.

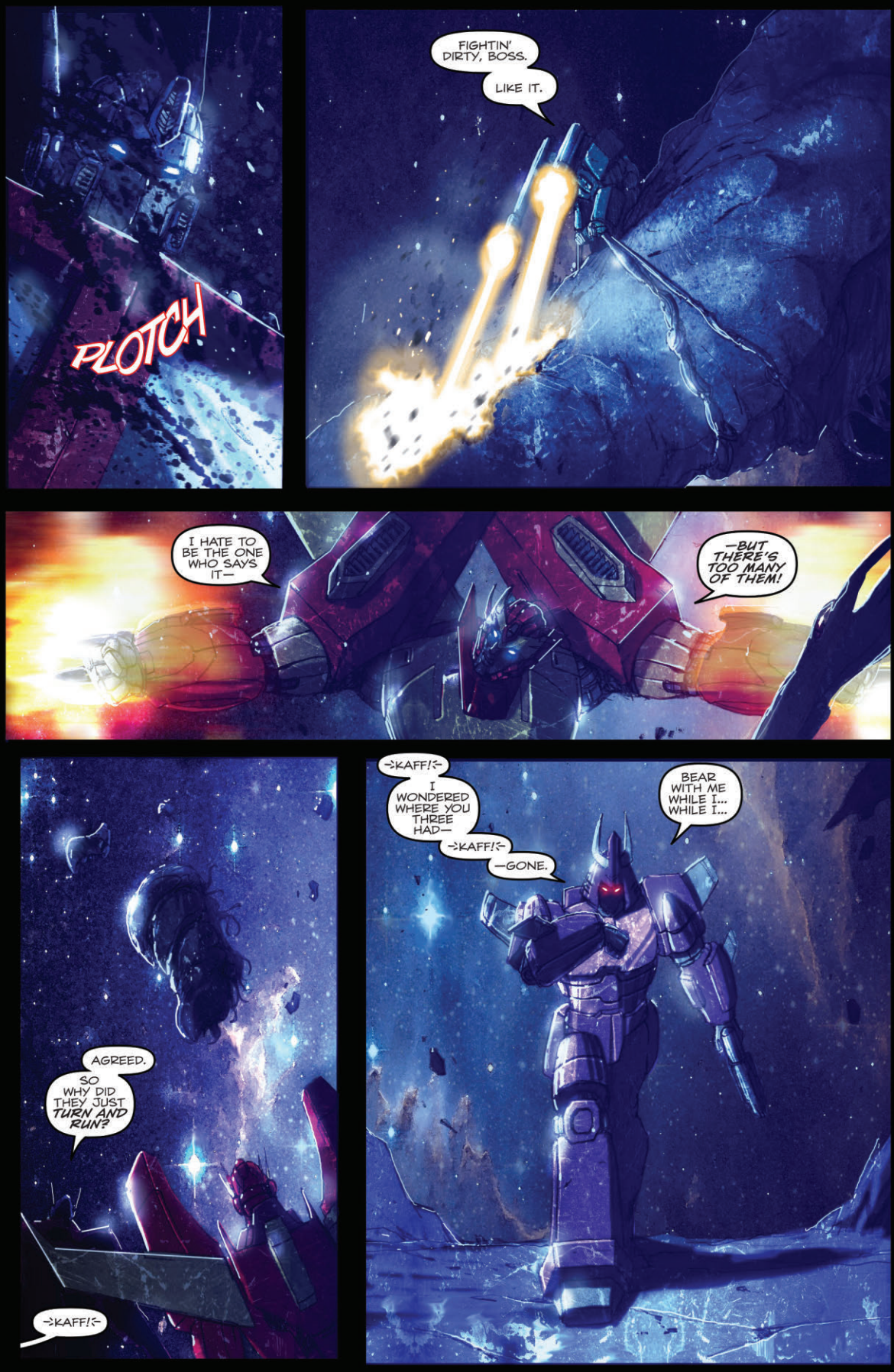

WELL, YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT, SCOOP. I ABSOLUTELY DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOU.
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN ANYTHING.
ARE YOU GOING TO DO A FULL RUNGIAN ANALYSIS ON ME? I HAVE SOMETHING OF A SITUATION TO DEAL WITH, UPSTAIRS.
THE TITAN'S BACK, ISN'T IT?
A TITAN'S BACK.
AREN'T YOU GOING TO ASK HOW I KNEW?
THIS CELL YOU LOCKED ME IN DOESN'T EXACTLY HAVE ANY WINDOWS, OR A NETWORK CONNECTION.
I FIGURE JAZZ TOLD YOU.
JAZZ FOLLOWS ORDERS. HE BELIEVES IN THEM.
JUST LIKE I BELIEVE YOU'RE THE CHOSEN ONE. BUT WHAT I DID... I DID A LITTLE RESEARCH, AFTER YOU BETRAYED ME.
I'M GETTING A LITTLE SICK OF EXPLAINING TO PEOPLE WHAT BETRAYAL MEANS, BUT OKAY, I'LL BITE.
WHAT DID YOU RESEARCH AND WHAT DID YOU LEARN?
YOU EVER READ THIS?
THE COVENANT OF PRIMES?
WHY WOULD ANYBODY WASTE THEIR TIME ON A BUNCH OF STORIES PASSED DOWN BY ZEALOTS WITH NOTHING BETTER TO DO?

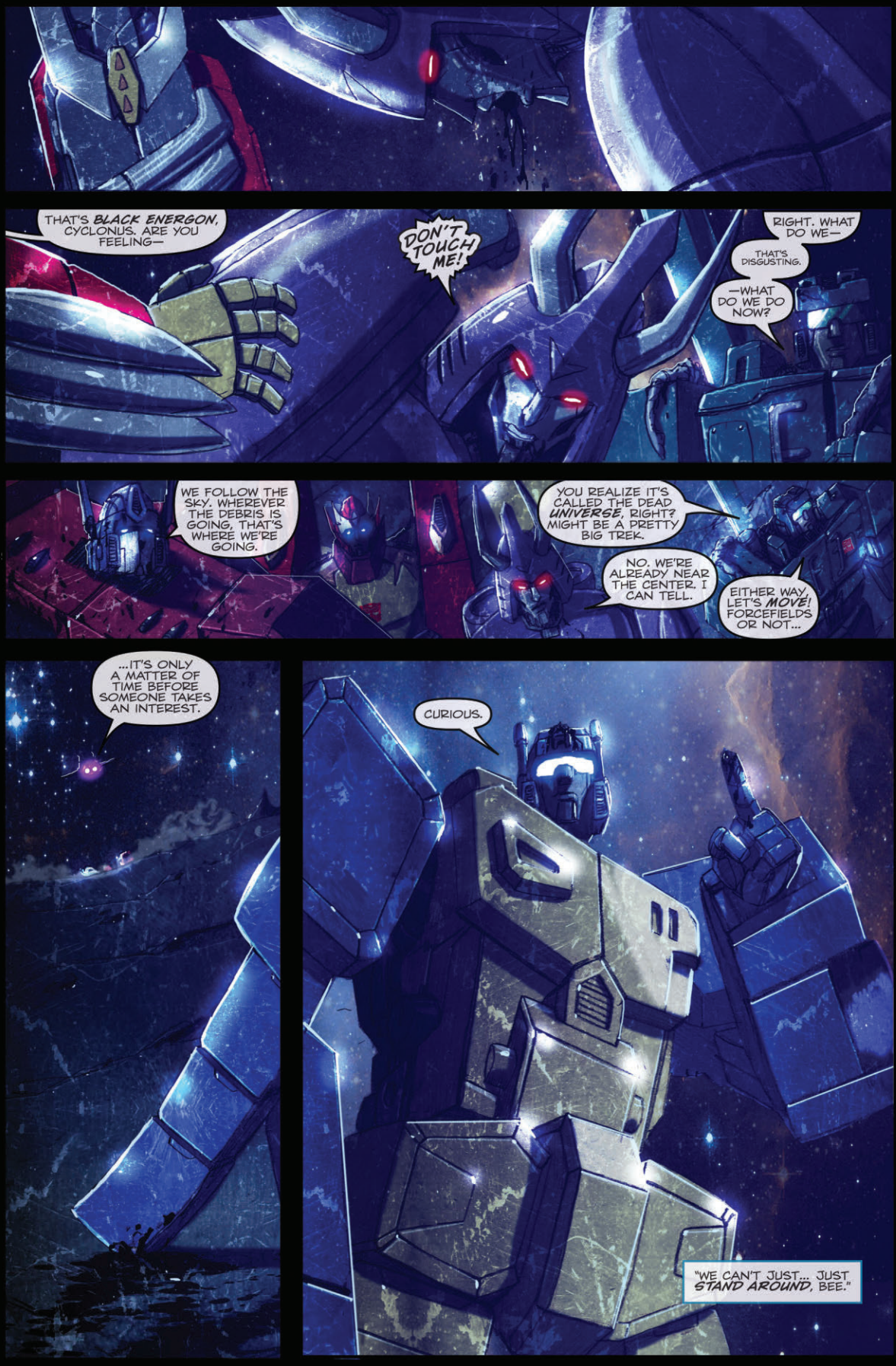
YOU REALLY ARE EXTRAORDINARY, STARSCREAM. YOU KNOW THAT?
A TITAN TELLS YOU YOU'RE THE CHOSEN ONE AND NO MATTER HOW MUCH THAT BENEFITS YOU, YOU DON'T BELIEVE THE WORDS.
BUT I DO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM, AND THAT'S WAY BETTER.
DO YOU HAVE A POINT, OR SHOULD I SEE IF JAZZ WAS SERIOUS ABOUT FINDING SCRATCHES?
HE IS—AND YOU CAME TO SEE ME, REMEMBER?
THERE'S AN ANCIENT LEGEND ABOUT THE TITANS.
YEAH, YEAH—ONLY GREAT CYBERTRONIANS LIKE PRIMES CAN AWAKEN TITANS. LIKE PRIMES AND ME, I MEAN.
THERE'S ANOTHER LEGEND. A BURIED LEGEND. A TALE THAT DATES BACK TO BEFORE NOVA PRIME UNITED CYBERTRON.
GAH. I HAVE THINGS TO DO.
THE FALSE PROPHET. THE LEADER WHO WILL UNMAKE EVERYTHING.
"HE SHALL ARRIVE WITH A TITAN; AND ADORNED THE TITAN WILL BE IN METAL BLACK."
AND BORED I'LL BE BY THE TIME I THUS WASTE-ITH LISTENING TO YOU.
LISTEN.
"AND HE SHALL ARRIVE AND STAND ALONE WHILE NOT ALONE; AND TIME WILL RUST...
"...AND STARS SHALL SCREAM.
"AND THE SYMBOL OF THE UNCREATOR SHALL BE CLEAR..."


"...AND HIS GAZE SHALL UNRAVEL THE LEGACY OF PRIMUS."
THIS WAS NOT WHAT I EXPECTED TO SEE, MY LORD.
I HAD THOUGHT THE TWO OF YOU HAD... ISSUES WITH ONE ANOTHER.
GALVATRON AND I MAY HAVE HAD OUR DIFFERENCES IN THE PAST, BUT WE HAVE BEEN ALLIES FOR MUCH, MUCH LONGER.
HEATED BATTLE FORGES A STRONGER ALLEGIANCE.
WELL PUT, OLD FRIEND. NOW...
...OPEN THE PORTAL, SHOCKWAVE, THAT WE MAY RE-CONQUER THE REMAINS OF MY EMPIRE.
PASSAGE BETWEEN THIS UNIVERSE AND YOURS IS NOT CURRENTLY POSSIBLE.
WHAT?!
YOU SAID IT WOULD BE!
YOU SAID CYBERTRON WOULD TREMBLE BENEATH MY METAL BOOT!
LORD NOVA, CALM—
DO NOT TOUCH ME, WARRIOR!
NOVA PRIME. THE DAWN OF THE NEW GOLDEN AGE IS INDEED AT HAND...
...BUT THE SPACE BRIDGE AT THE HEART OF THE TITAN VANISHED WHEN IT CREATED THIS LINK BETWEEN OUR TWO WORLDS.
SO WE CAN SEE YOUR FAILED, RUINED CYBERTRON—
—BUT NOT CRUSH IT?
THAT IS ONE WAY OF DESCRIBING THE SITUATION. HOWEVER...

"...HAVE YOU EVER KNOWN ME TO NOT HAVE A PLAN?"
DO WE ACTUALLY HAVE A PLAN?
ARRIVE AND SURVIVE.
YOU'VE BEEN WITH WHEELIE TOO LONG.
THE DEAD UNIVERSE.
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS EXPECTING...
HFF!
...BUT IT WASN'T THIS.
THIS IS DIFFERENT. THIS IS... OFF. EVERYTHING'S BREAKING UP.
AND MOVING. LOOK AT THE SKY—ALL THE DEBRIS IS BEING PULLED IN THE SAME DIRECTION.
IT'S CONTRACTING.
THE DEAD UNIVERSE IS DYING.
HEY—WHERE'S CYCLONUS?
PROBABLY DONE A RUNNER.
OR MORE LIKELY...

...THEY GOT HIM!
'SIT ME, OR ARE THESE GUYS—
OOF!
—FAMILIAR?
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF FILIAL CANNIBALISM?
YES. SORRY, NO, WHAT?
SOME SPECIES EAT THEIR YOUNG.
I THINK THE VENOM IN OUR FORCEFIELDS IS GIVING THE CYBERWRAITHS AN APPETITE.
ARGH!
AIM FOR THE STOMACH—IT SEEMS TO BE THE LEAST PROTECTED—


PLOTCH
FIGHTIN' DIRTY, BOSS.
LIKE IT.
I HATE TO BE THE ONE WHO SAYS IT—
—BUT THERE'S TOO MANY OF THEM!
AGREED.
SO WHY DID THEY JUST TURN AND RUN?
-KAFF!-
-KAFF!-
I WONDERED WHERE YOU THREE HAD—
-KAFF!-
—GONE.
BEAR WITH ME WHILE I... WHILE I...


THAT'S BLACK ENERGON, CYCLONUS. ARE YOU FEELING—
DON'T TOUCH ME!
RIGHT. WHAT DO WE—
THAT'S DISGUSTING.
—WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
WE FOLLOW THE SKY. WHEREVER THE DEBRIS IS GOING, THAT'S WHERE WE'RE GOING.
YOU REALIZE IT'S CALLED THE DEAD UNIVERSE, RIGHT? MIGHT BE A PRETTY BIG TREK.
NO. WE'RE ALREADY NEAR THE CENTER. I CAN TELL.
EITHER WAY, LET'S MOVE! FORCEFIELDS OR NOT...
...IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE SOMEONE TAKES AN INTEREST.
CURIOUS.
"WE CAN'T JUST... JUST STAND AROUND, BEE."

YEAH? WELL, WE CAN'T ACT WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT'S HAPPENING.
SORRY TO HAVE TO SAY IT, BEE—BUT THAT'S THE KIND OF THINKING THAT GOT US INTO THIS MESS.
WHAT?!
YOU TALKED A GOOD GAME WITH THE DINOBOTS. BUT YOU NEED TO ACT, TOO.
WHEN YOU WERE IN CHARGE OF THE CITY, YOU WERE PARALYZED.
THAT'S WHY WE LOST THE CITY TO STARSCREAM. THAT'S WHY WE'RE OUT HERE WHILE HE'S SITTING PRETTY ON HIS THRONE.
THAT'S NOT...
THE SAME THING'S GOING TO HAPPEN HERE. IF WE DON'T ACT—
DECEPTICONS ENGAGE—OPERATION: SALVATION!
—SOMEBODY ELSE WILL.

Cover by: PHIL JIMENEZ • Colors by: ROMULO FAJARDO, JR.

CHAPTER 3

Art by: ATILIO ROJO and JAMES RAIZ • Colors by: JOSH PEREZ • Letters by: TOM B. LONG

Cover by: CASEY W. COLLER • Colors by: JOANA LAFUENTE

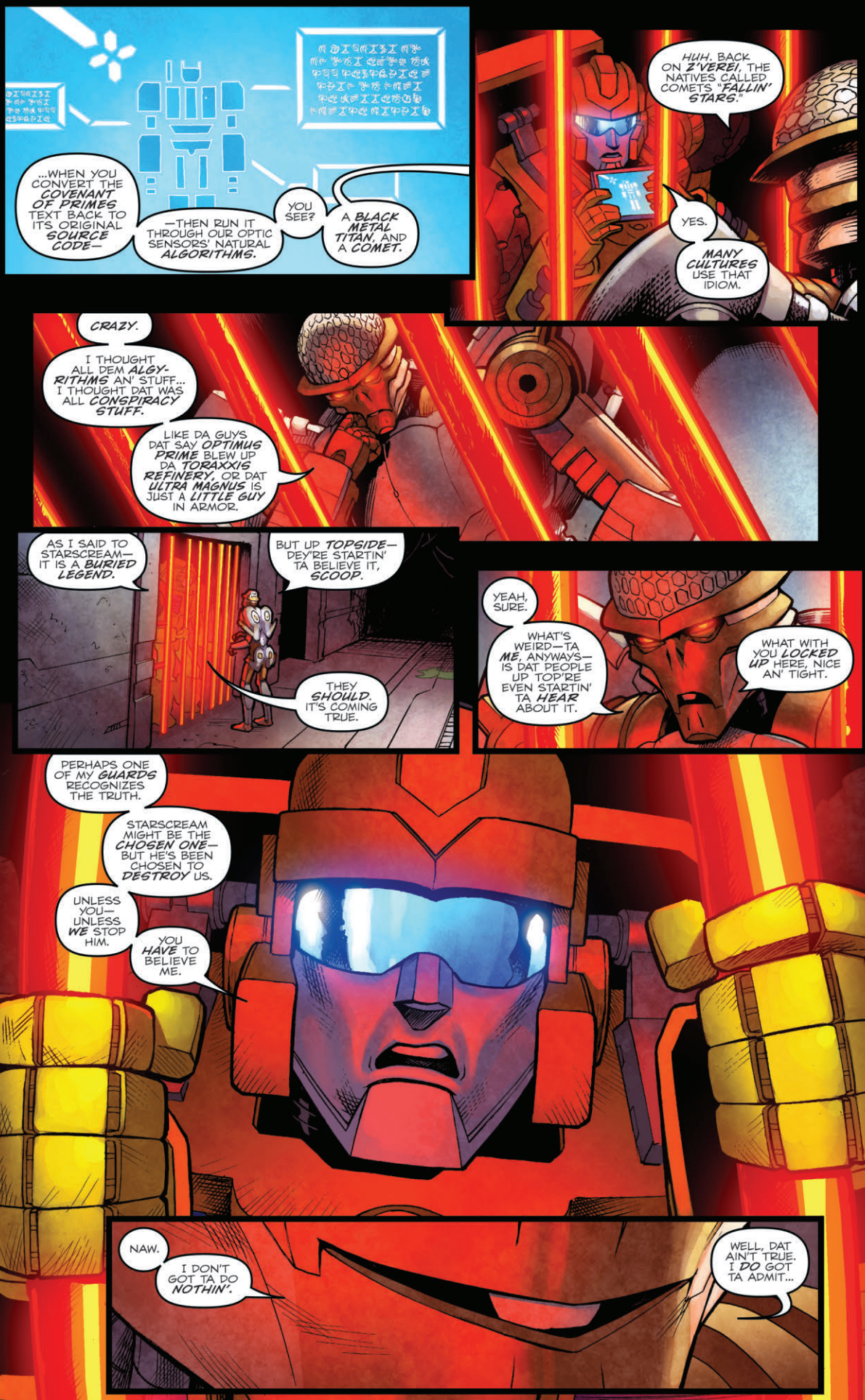
CYBERTRON.
I GUESS YOU COULD SAY YOU DIED FOR YOUR DREAM, METALHAWK.
WE'VE GOT NO MORE AUTOBOTS, NO MORE DECEPTICONS—JUST CYBERTRONIANS, LIVING TOGETHER.
LIKE YOU ALWAYS WANTED...
...AND I'M THEIR LEADER.
WHICH I THOUGHT MEANT THAT THEY'D FOLLOW MY LEAD.
REMEMBER WHEN THAT TITAN SAID I WAS THE CHOSEN ONE?
WELL, I DON'T KNOW IF YOU HEARD THE NEWS—YOU PROBABLY DON'T GET OUT MUCH, YOU KNOW, BEING DEAD.
BUT THE TITAN CAME BACK.
IT'S JUST STANDING THERE, BUT THE PEOPLE—THE ONES THAT ARE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING WHAT I SAY—THEY WANT ME TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.
HEH.
I KNOW WHAT YOU'D TELL ME.
YOU'D SAY THE PEOPLE AREN'T SUPPOSED TO FOLLOW—I'M SUPPOSED TO LEAD.
YOU'RE RIGHT, METALHAWK. YOU ALWAYS WERE RIGHT.
THANKS FOR THE PEP-TALK.
OH, AND...
...SORRY I KILLED YOU, PAL.

STARSCREAM!
PROTECT US!
SAVE US FROM THE BLACK TITAN!
IT'S COME FOR US—
—LIKE THE LOST PROPHECY FORETOLD!
THE DARK DAYS ARE HERE!
MY ADORING PUBLIC.
NO WORRIES, FOLKS.
I'M ON MY WAY TO HAVE A LITTLE CHAT WITH OUR IMPOSING VISITOR.
EVERYTHING WILL BE JUST FINE.
BOSS!
WAIT UP, BOSS!
RATTRAP— SHOULDN'T YOU BE WATCHING THE TITAN?
YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW...
...I JUS' WANNA MAKE SURE YOU'RE OKAY, GOIN' OUT ALONE.
WELL, I DON'T WANT TO GO AT ALL.
I DO WANT TO GET OUT OF THIS CROWD.
I WORRY 'BOUT YA, STARSCREAM.

UH-HUH.
YOU MEAN YOU WORRY THAT IF I WEREN'T AROUND, YOU'D BE OUT ON THE STREET BEFORE YOU COULD *TAKE OVER?*
AW, BOSS, THAT AIN'T *FAIR.*
OH, DON'T GET ME *WRONG*, RATTRAP— I *ADMIRE* THE ATTITUDE.
YOU REMIND ME OF A LITTLE *DECEPTICON* THAT USED TO FEEL THAT WAY ABOUT OL' *MEGATRON* HERE...
...AND LOOK HOW *I* TURNED OUT.
LET ME JUST GIVE YOU A WORD OF *ADVICE*, SOMETHING THAT WOULD HAVE SPARED ME A *LOT* OF TROUBLE OVER THE CENTURIES—
—DON'T MAKE YOUR *FIRST MOVE* UNTIL YOU'RE SURE OF YOUR *LAST ONE.*
BE SEEING YOU. I HAVE A *TITAN* TO TALK TO.
GOOD LUCK, BOSS.
PLEASE—

"—WHEN HAVE I EVER NEEDED LUCK?"
EYOOSH
YOU EVER WISH OPTIMUS PRIME WAS STILL IN CHARGE?
BWAFF
ARCEE...
YEAH, OKAY—
—I GOT IT, PROWL...
K-CHOOM
...NOW'S NOT THE TIME.
SHRAKKK
ANY GUESS WHAT THESE CREEP-O'S ARE AFTER, BUMBLEBEE?
ALL I KNOW IS I'M NOT LETTING THEM GET IT!
YOU HEARD HIM, DINOBOTS. FLATTEN THESE GUYS!
GRYAH!

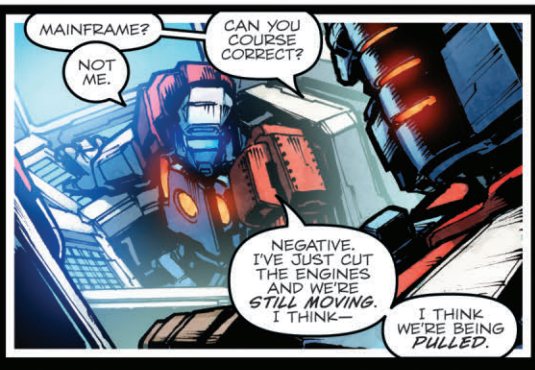
HEY—
SOUNDWAVE!
CHAK
IRONHIDE'S GOT A GOOD QUESTION—WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO ACCOMPLISH HERE?!
FIGHTING US ISN'T GONNA GET YOU BACK IN STARSCREAM'S GOOD GRACES!
AUTOBOT—
—HOW HAVE YOU SURVIVED SO LONG WITH SUCH LIMITED PERCEPTIONS?
KRA-BOOM
SHAKKA SHAKKA
YOU ARE—AND ALWAYS HAVE BEEN—NOTHING MORE THAN AN IMPEDIMENT TO PROGRESS...
...STANDING BETWEEN DECEPTICONS AND THE SALVATION OF CYBERTRON.
IT'S TOO LATE! I CAN SMELL HIM FROM HERE.
RAVAGE, WHAT ARE YOU—
UP.
IN THE SKY... IT'S A PLANE—
—AND WE'RE TOO LATE.
"THE TRUTH REVEALS ITSELF..."


...WHEN YOU CONVERT THE COVENANT OF PRIMES TEXT BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL SOURCE CODE—
—THEN RUN IT THROUGH OUR OPTIC SENSORS' NATURAL ALGORITHMS.
YOU SEE?
A BLACK METAL TITAN, AND A COMET.
HUH. BACK ON Z'VEREI, THE NATIVES CALLED COMETS "FALLIN' STARS."
YES.
MANY CULTURES USE THAT IDIOM.
CRAZY.
I THOUGHT ALL DEM ALGY-RITHMS AN' STUFF... I THOUGHT DAT WAS ALL CONSPIRACY STUFF.
LIKE DA GUYS DAT SAY OPTIMUS PRIME BLEW UP DA TORAXXIS REFINERY, OR DAT ULTRA MAGNUS IS JUST A LITTLE GUY IN ARMOR.
AS I SAID TO STARSCREAM—IT IS A BURIED LEGEND.
BUT UP TOPSIDE—DEY'RE STARTIN' TA BELIEVE IT, SCOOP.
THEY SHOULD. IT'S COMING TRUE.
YEAH, SURE.
WHAT'S WEIRD—TA ME, ANYWAYS—IS DAT PEOPLE UP TOP'RE EVEN STARTIN' TA HEAR ABOUT IT.
WHAT WITH YOU LOCKED UP HERE, NICE AN' TIGHT.
PERHAPS ONE OF MY GUARDS RECOGNIZES THE TRUTH.
STARSCREAM MIGHT BE THE CHOSEN ONE—BUT HE'S BEEN CHOSEN TO DESTROY US.
UNLESS YOU—UNLESS WE STOP HIM.
YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ME.
NAW.
I DON'T GOT TA DO NOTHIN'.
WELL, DAT AIN'T TRUE. I DO GOT TA ADMIT...

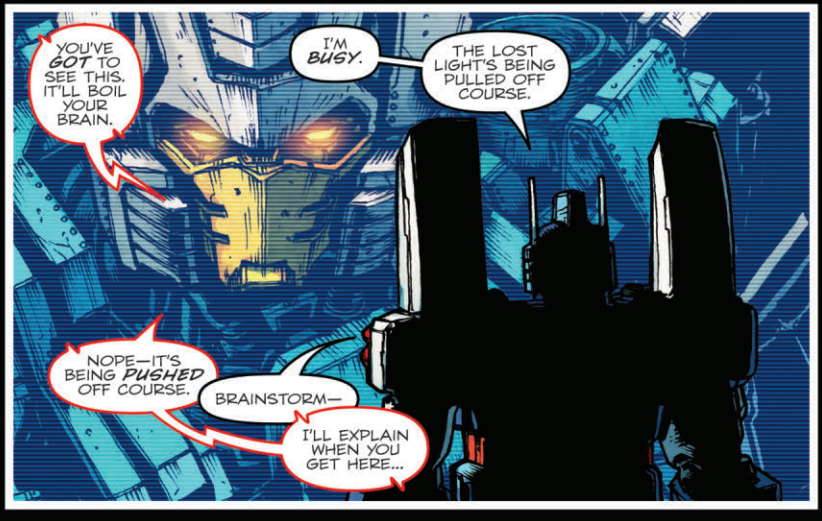
"...THE END O' THE WORLD WOULD MAKE ONE HECK OF A LAST MOVE."
ULTRA MAGNUS— I'VE DETECTED JHIAXUS' FLIGHT SIGNATURE.
PREPARING TO QUANTUM JUMP. SIXTY SECONDS AND COUNTING...
THANK YOU, MAINFRAME.
THE LOST LIGHT.

YOU SHOULD TAKE THE CHAIR, MAGNUS.
I THINK I'LL STAND.
YOU SURE? CAPTAIN HAS TO SIT SOMEWH—
RATCHET.
I PREFER TO STAND.

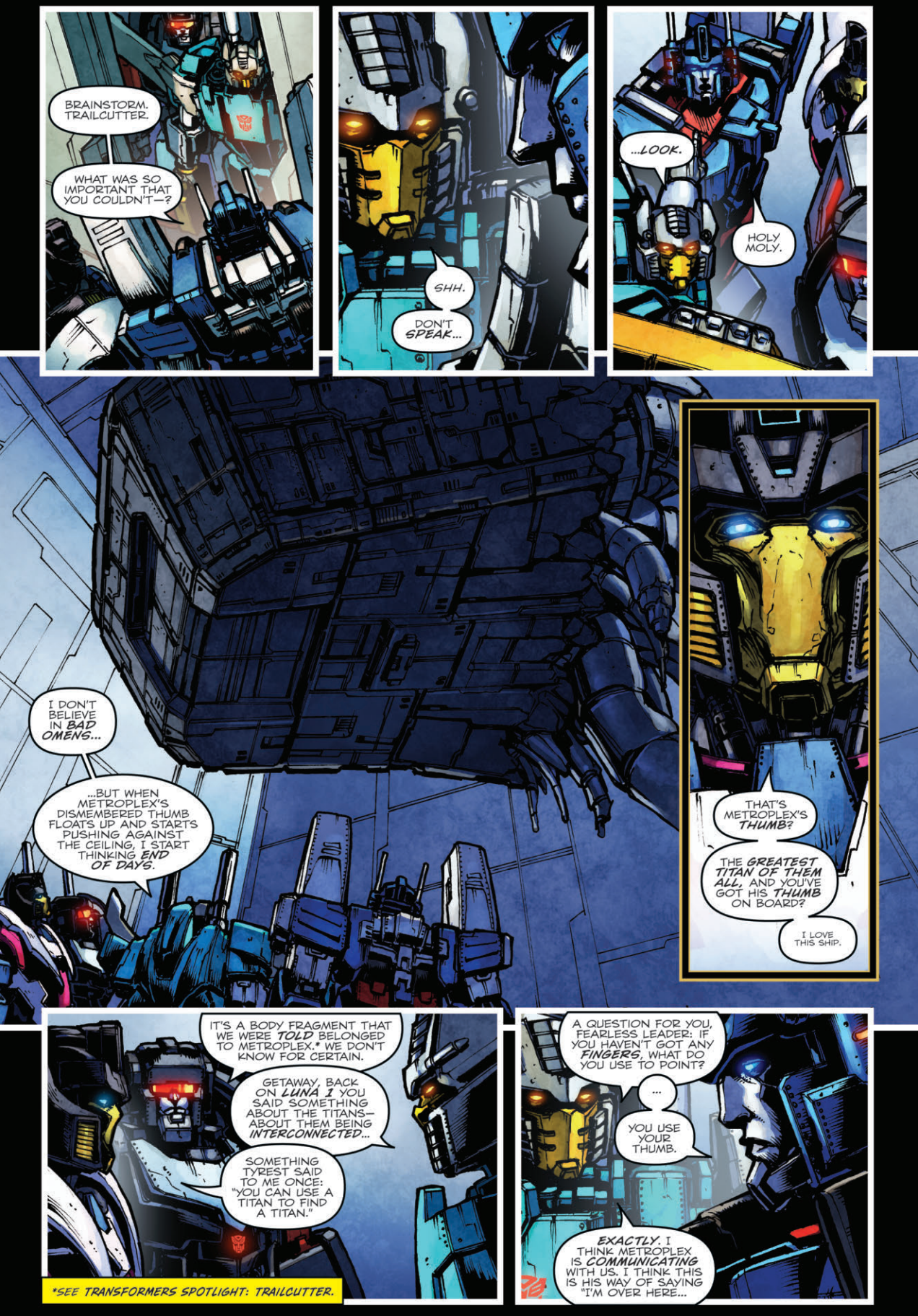
DID YOU FEEL THAT? THE SHIP MOVED.
NO, I MEAN IT CHANGED COURSE.
UM...


MAINFRAME?
CAN YOU COURSE CORRECT?
NOT ME.
NEGATIVE. I'VE JUST CUT THE ENGINES AND WE'RE STILL MOVING. I THINK—
I THINK WE'RE BEING PULLED.

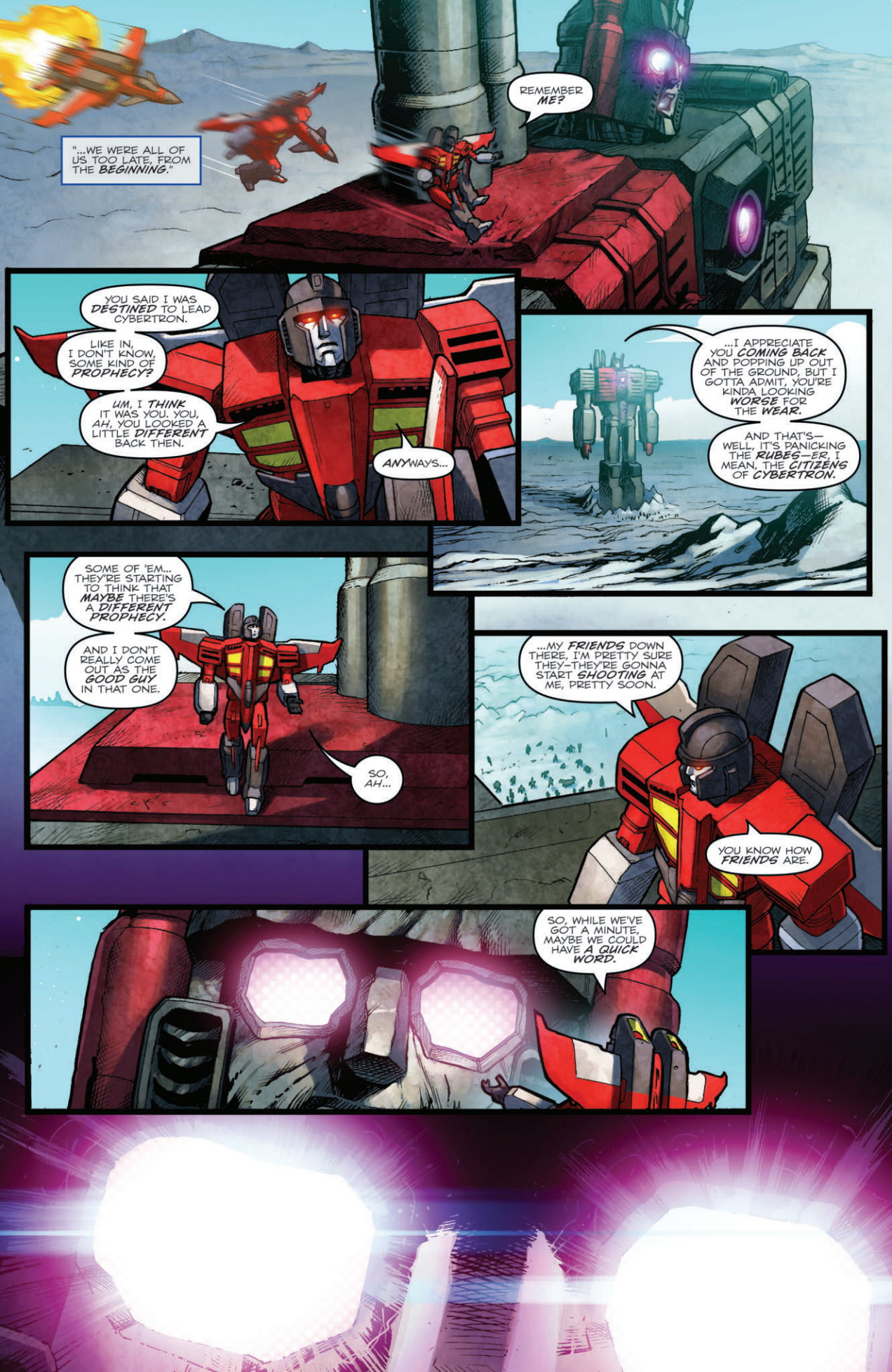
MAGNUS? I'VE GOT BRAINSTORM CALLING FROM SHUTTLE BAY 3.
PUT HIM ON THE OVERHEAD.


YOU'VE GOT TO SEE THIS. IT'LL BOIL YOUR BRAIN.
I'M BUSY.
THE LOST LIGHT'S BEING PULLED OFF COURSE.
NOPE—IT'S BEING PUSHED OFF COURSE.
BRAINSTORM—
I'LL EXPLAIN WHEN YOU GET HERE...

"...OH, AND BRING GETAWAY."
WELL THEN!
LEADERSHIP.
LEADING. BEING A LEADER.
WHAT'S IT LIKE SO FAR?
MEH.
"MEH"?
SORRY, GETAWAY— EARTH WORD. FRIEND OF MINE USED TO SAY IT A LOT.
XAARON'S DEBATING SOCIETY: UPCOMING TOPICS
OIL RESERVE TOURS
SWERVE'S EVERYONE WELCOME* NO GUNS NO SWORDS NO BRIEFCASES *RESTRICTIONS APPLY
CYBERCROSIS THE HIDDEN KILLE FREE CHECK-UPS SEE RATCHET
ARE YOU MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR ALT MODE? DON'T TAKE YOUR TRANSFORMATION COG FOR GRANTED
AUTOBOT CODE REFRESH
IGNORANCE IS NO EXCUSE
10,000 PAGES IN ONLY TWO WEEKS
YOUR BADGE WEAR IT STRAIGHT WEAR IT PROUD
COPING WITH GRIEF SEE RUNG, LEVEL 3(W)
WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
I THINK IT MEANS—
—I THINK IT JUST MEANS "MEH."
I THOUGHT YOU HATED AMBIGUITY IN SPEECH.
YOU SAID THAT TO ME ONCE, REMEMBER?
YOU WERE VERY CLEAR ABOUT IT.
I'M TRYING TO "LIGHTEN UP."
RUNG SAYS THAT IF I RELAX MY SELF-IMPOSED BAN ON IDIOMS, METAPHORS, AND SLANG IT'LL HELP SOFTEN MY IMAGE.
WHATEVER FLOATS YOUR BOAT.
NO NEED TO SHOW OFF.


BRAINSTORM. TRAILCUTTER.
WHAT WAS SO IMPORTANT THAT YOU COULDN'T—?
SHH.
DON'T SPEAK...
...LOOK.
HOLY MOLY.
I DON'T BELIEVE IN BAD OMENS...
...BUT WHEN METROPLEX'S DISMEMBERED THUMB FLOATS UP AND STARTS PUSHING AGAINST THE CEILING, I START THINKING END OF DAYS.
THAT'S METROPLEX'S THUMB?
THE GREATEST TITAN OF THEM ALL, AND YOU'VE GOT HIS THUMB ON BOARD?
I LOVE THIS SHIP.
IT'S A BODY FRAGMENT THAT WE WERE TOLD BELONGED TO METROPLEX.* WE DON'T KNOW FOR CERTAIN.
GETAWAY, BACK ON LUNA 1 YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT THE TITANS—ABOUT THEM BEING INTERCONNECTED...
SOMETHING TYREST SAID TO ME ONCE: "YOU CAN USE A TITAN TO FIND A TITAN."
*SEE TRANSFORMERS SPOTLIGHT: TRAILCUTTER.
A QUESTION FOR YOU, FEARLESS LEADER: IF YOU HAVEN'T GOT ANY FINGERS, WHAT DO YOU USE TO POINT?
...
YOU USE YOUR THUMB.
EXACTLY. I THINK METROPLEX IS COMMUNICATING WITH US. I THINK THIS IS HIS WAY OF SAYING "I'M OVER HERE...

"...COME GET ME."
SAY THE WORD AND IT STARTS RAINING LITTLE OPPORTUNIST PARTS—
—AND I GUARANTEE I WON'T NEED A SECOND SHOT.
NOTHING GOOD IS GOING TO COME OUT OF THIS, BEE.
LET ARCEE TAKE THE SHOT.
NO... SOMETHING'S WRONG.
YOU'RE HESITATING AGAIN!
LOOK AT US!
WE'RE TEAMING UP WITH THE ENEMY AND LETTING STARSCREAM DO WHATEVER HE WANTS?!
PROWL, SHUT UP FOR ONCE. ALL YOUR ATTITUDE EVER GOT US WAS... WAS THE CONSTRUCTICONS.
THE... CONSTRUCTICONS STAND WITH YOU?
LONG STORY, SOUNDWAVE.
AND THIS ISN'T A TEAM UP. WE JUST HAPPEN TO HAVE THE SAME OBJECTIVE.
THEN DO SOMETHING!
DON'T JUST LET THIS—THIS—DECEPTICON CONTROL YOU!
PROWL—I KNOW YOU HARBOR RESENTMENT TOWARD ME, AFTER MY PART IN YOUR MIND'S TAKE-OVER.
"RESENTMENT"? WELL, I ALWAYS HEARD YOU WERE PERCEPTIVE, YOU BLUE—
ACTING RASHLY AT THIS JUNCTURE WILL DO NONE OF US ANY GOOD. AND REGARDLESS...


"...WE WERE ALL OF US TOO LATE, FROM THE BEGINNING."
REMEMBER ME?
YOU SAID I WAS DESTINED TO LEAD CYBERTRON.
LIKE IN, I DON'T KNOW, SOME KIND OF PROPHECY?
UM, I THINK IT WAS YOU. YOU, AH, YOU LOOKED A LITTLE DIFFERENT BACK THEN.
ANYWAYS...
...I APPRECIATE YOU COMING BACK AND POPPING UP OUT OF THE GROUND, BUT I GOTTA ADMIT, YOU'RE KINDA LOOKING WORSE FOR THE WEAR.
AND THAT'S— WELL, IT'S PANICKING THE RUBES—ER, I MEAN, THE CITIZENS OF CYBERTRON.
SOME OF 'EM... THEY'RE STARTING TO THINK THAT MAYBE THERE'S A DIFFERENT PROPHECY.
AND I DON'T REALLY COME OUT AS THE GOOD GUY IN THAT ONE.
SO, AH...
...MY FRIENDS DOWN THERE, I'M PRETTY SURE THEY—THEY'RE GONNA START SHOOTING AT ME, PRETTY SOON.
YOU KNOW HOW FRIENDS ARE.
SO, WHILE WE'VE GOT A MINUTE, MAYBE WE COULD HAVE A QUICK WORD.

ASTROTRAIN—
—GET UP—
—ANSWER ME, BUDDY!
ALL GUNS ON THE TITAN—
IT'S STILL NOT MOVING, PROWL, IT—SOME KIND OF WAVE OR—
SITREP—ALL UNITS!
PROWL—I DON'T—I'M NOT FEELING RIGHT...
ARCEE—
WE HAVE TO GET THE WOUNDED BACK TO BASE.
YOU LET THIS HAPPEN, BEE!
WE ATTACK NOW!
PROWL, GET YOUR PRIORITIES IN ORDER—
"—THAT DEATH WAVE IS HEADING RIGHT FOR THE CITY—

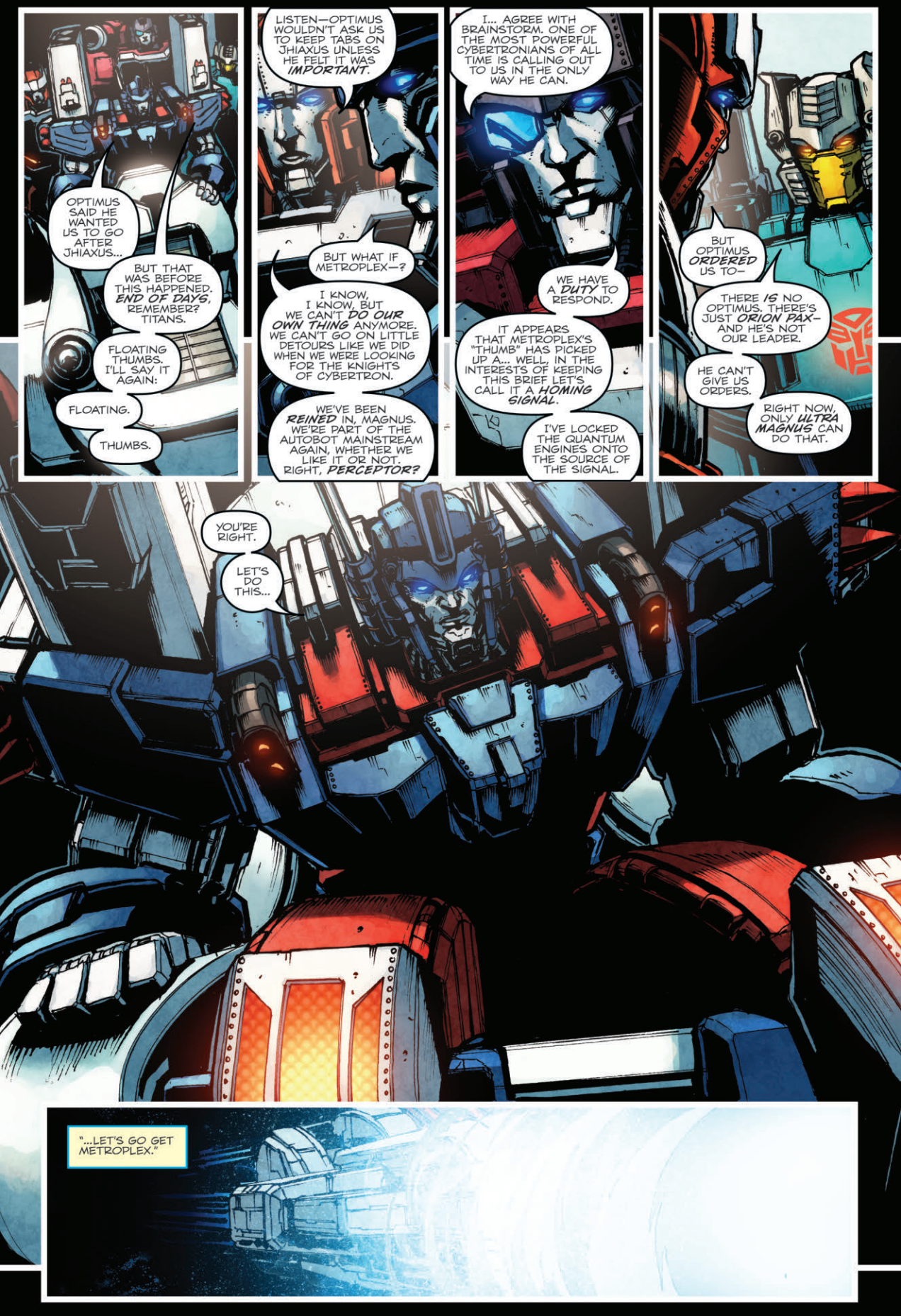
"—AND STARSCREAM IS THE ONLY THING STANDING IN ITS WAY!"
EVERYONE! GET CLEAR!
RUN!
FLY!
CYBERTRON IS MINE—
—AND THIS WILL NOT STOP ME!

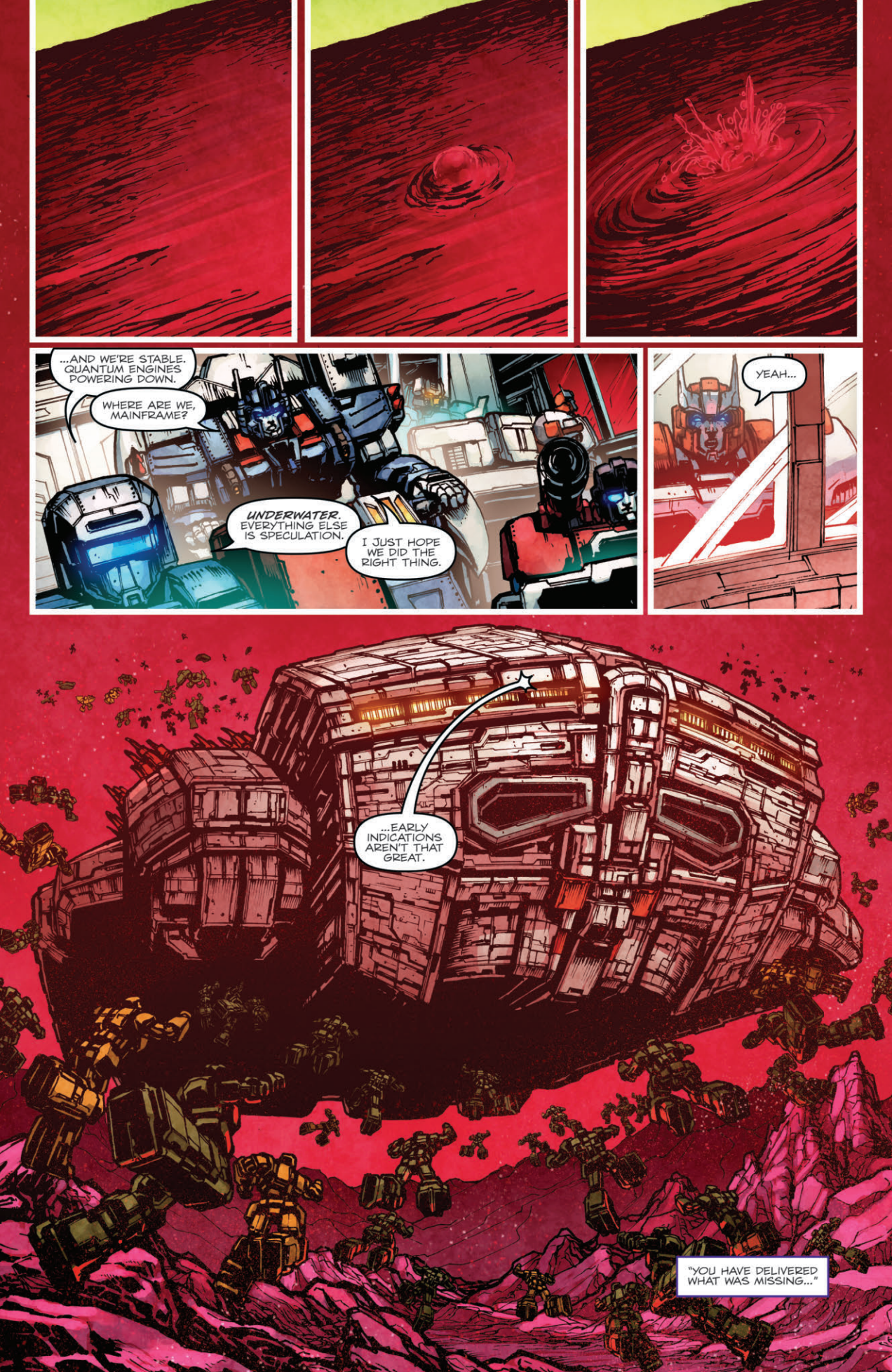
THIS WILL NOT STOP ME.
I WILL RULE CYBERTRON.
NOW AND FOREV–
–AAAHGH!

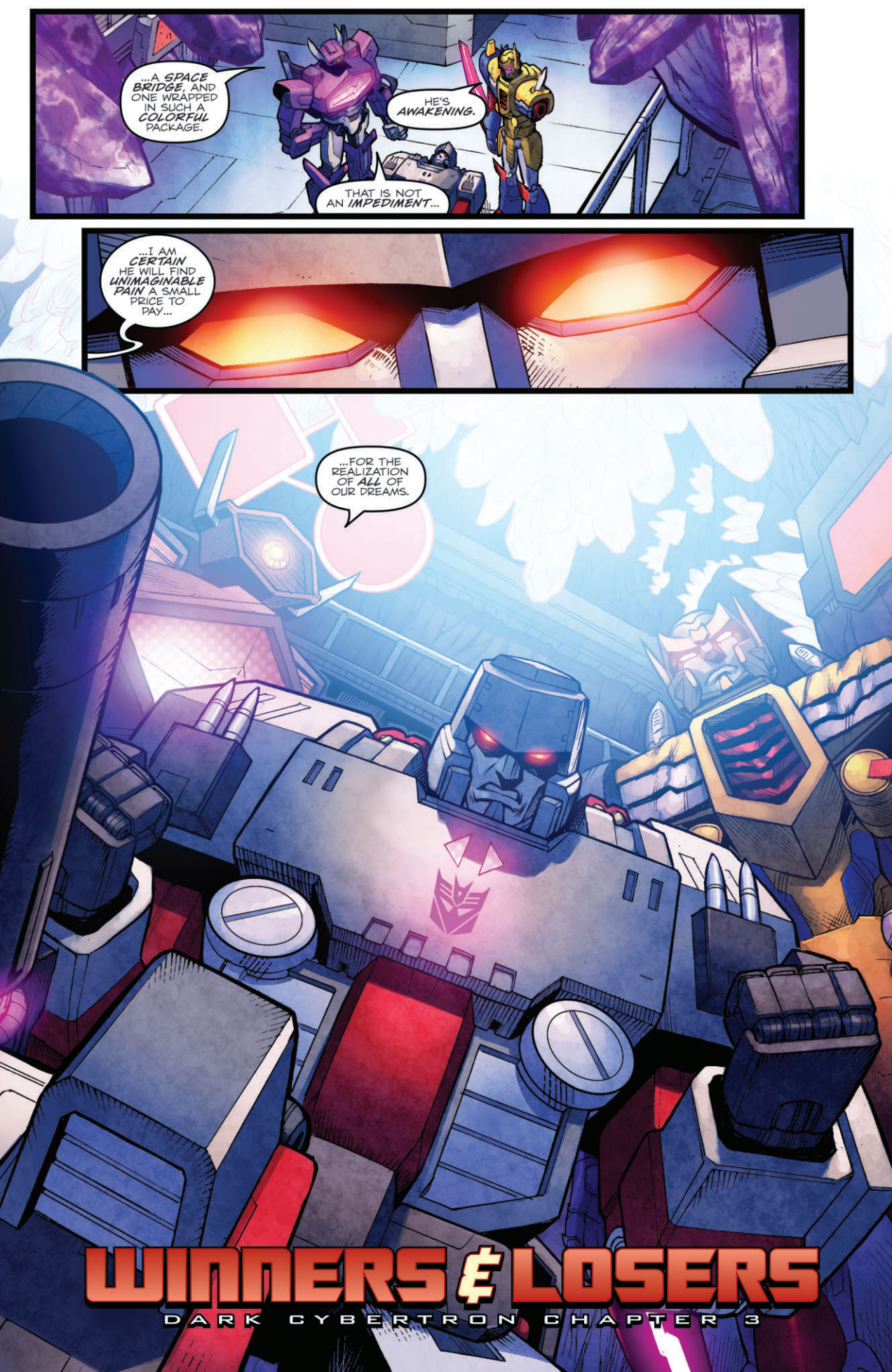
WHAT NOW?
OH, FOR THE LOVE OF...
YOU KILLED ME.
I TRUSTED YOU.
I BEFRIENDED YOU.
AND YOU KILLED ME THE MOMENT IT SUITED YOU.
HEY, IF IT'S ANY CONSOLATION, METALHAWK—
—I CLEARLY DIDN'T DO A GOOD JOB OF IT.
NOW IS NOT THE TIME.
CLANK
BUT MY VENGEANCE KNOWS NO BOUNDS.
JUST TELL ME...

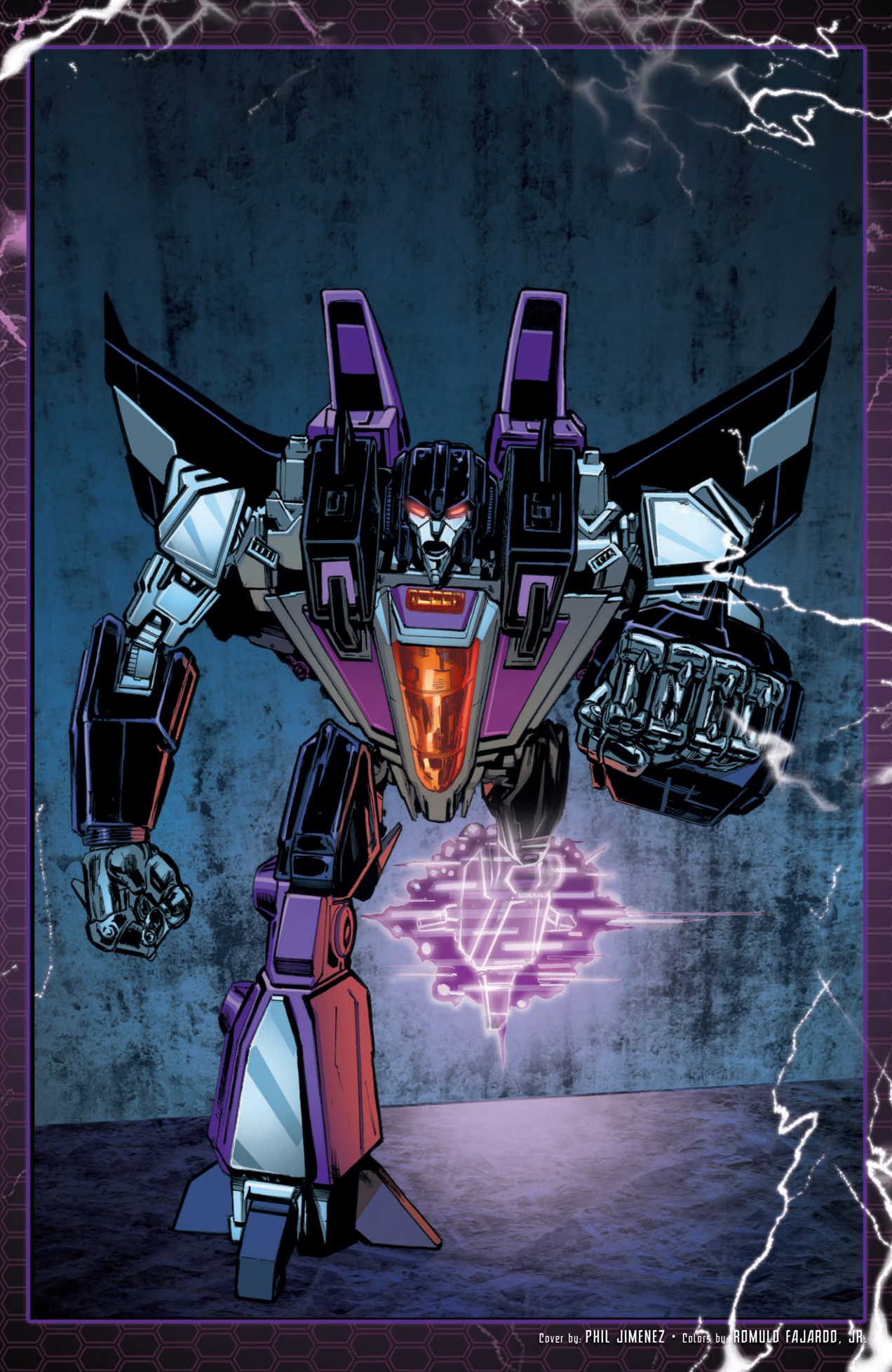
...WHAT DO YOU WANT?
YOUR MASTER.
NO.
MEGATRON IS GONE.
NOTHING IS EVER GONE, STARSCREAM...
...AND EVERYTHING COMES BACK TO HAUNT YOU.
HUH.
WELL, DAT AIN'T WHAT I 'SPECTED...

...WHADDYA WANNA DO, NOW?
YOU WANNA MAKE OUR *PLAY* 'GAINST OL' SCREAMER NOWSABOUTS?
WHAT?
LOOK AT THE CITY—
"—PEOPLE ARE DYING—"
—WE HAVE TO *HELP* THEM!
WE'LL DEAL WITH STARSCREAM *LATER!*
UH, YEAH, *SURE*, DAT'S WHAT *I* WAS THINKIN', TOO. AFTER ALL...
"...AIN'T LIKE NOBODY'S GONNA DOUBT THAT THERE'S A *DARK CYBERTRON* PROPHECY ANYMORE."


OPTIMUS SAID HE WANTED US TO GO AFTER JHIAXUS...
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE THIS HAPPENED. END OF DAYS, REMEMBER? TITANS.
FLOATING THUMBS. I'LL SAY IT AGAIN:
FLOATING.
THUMBS.
LISTEN—OPTIMUS WOULDN'T ASK US TO KEEP TABS ON JHIAXUS UNLESS HE FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT.
BUT WHAT IF METROPLEX—?
I KNOW, I KNOW, BUT WE CAN'T DO OUR OWN THING ANYMORE. WE CAN'T GO ON LITTLE DETOURS LIKE WE DID WHEN WE WERE LOOKING FOR THE KNIGHTS OF CYBERTRON.
WE'VE BEEN REINED IN, MAGNUS. WE'RE PART OF THE AUTOBOT MAINSTREAM AGAIN, WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT. RIGHT, PERCEPTOR?
I... AGREE WITH BRAINSTORM. ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL CYBERTRONIANS OF ALL TIME IS CALLING OUT TO US IN THE ONLY WAY HE CAN.
WE HAVE A DUTY TO RESPOND.
IT APPEARS THAT METROPLEX'S "THUMB" HAS PICKED UP A... WELL, IN THE INTERESTS OF KEEPING THIS BRIEF LET'S CALL IT A HOMING SIGNAL.
I'VE LOCKED THE QUANTUM ENGINES ONTO THE SOURCE OF THE SIGNAL.
BUT OPTIMUS ORDERED US TO–
THERE IS NO OPTIMUS. THERE'S JUST ORION PAX– AND HE'S NOT OUR LEADER.
HE CAN'T GIVE US ORDERS.
RIGHT NOW, ONLY ULTRA MAGNUS CAN DO THAT.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
LET'S DO THIS...
"...LET'S GO GET METROPLEX."


...AND WE'RE STABLE. QUANTUM ENGINES POWERING DOWN.
WHERE ARE WE, MAINFRAME?
UNDERWATER. EVERYTHING ELSE IS SPECULATION.
I JUST HOPE WE DID THE RIGHT THING.
YEAH...
...EARLY INDICATIONS AREN'T THAT GREAT.
"YOU HAVE DELIVERED WHAT WAS MISSING..."


...A SPACE BRIDGE, AND ONE WRAPPED IN SUCH A COLORFUL PACKAGE.
HE'S AWAKENING.
THAT IS NOT AN IMPEDIMENT...
...I AM CERTAIN HE WILL FIND UNIMAGINABLE PAIN A SMALL PRICE TO PAY...
...FOR THE REALIZATION OF ALL OF OUR DREAMS.
WINNERS & LOSERS
DARK CYBERTRON CHAPTER 3



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CHAPTER 4

Art by: ATILIO ROJO, JAMES RAIZ, NICK ROCHE, LIVIO RAMONDELLI, and ROBERT GILL
Colors by: ROMULO FAJARDO, JR. and LIVIO RAMONDELLI • Letters by: GILBERTO LAZCANO

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THE LOST LIGHT.
AN UNKNOWN LOCATION.
WE'RE SURROUNDED.
SURROUNDED, MAINFRAME?
THE LOST LIGHT IS 15 MILES LONG AND TEN MILES WIDE. DO YOU REALIZE HOW MANY PEOPLE IT WOULD TAKE TO—
TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY SIX, ULTRA MAGNUS.
I CAN COUNT AGAIN IF YOU LIKE.
UNDERWATER! LUCKY FOR US THE LOST LIGHT WAS BUILT AS A SUBMARINE. EH, PERCEPTOR?
IS THAT TRUE?
YEP.
REALLY?
YEP.
REALLY, THOUGH?
NO.

IT'S TOO DARK—I CAN'T MAKE OUT WHO WE'RE DEALING WITH. THEY LOOK *MECHANICAL*, BUT BEYOND THAT...
ALLOW ME.
POF
WELL THEY'RE *ARMED*, WHOEVER THEY ARE.
I'M SURE I'VE SEEN THOSE INSIGNIAS BEFORE...
CHECK OUT THE CHEST TURRET. THAT'S CLEARLY PART OF SOME *SECONDARY ANATOMY*. THEY'VE GOT ALT MODES.
WE'RE ASSUMING THEY'RE *SENTIENT*, BUT THERE'S NO EVIDENCE THEY'RE SPARK-BASED *OR* WARM-WIRED.
BLASTER—I WANT THESE PICTURES BEAMED AROUND THE SHIP. *SOMEONE* MUST RECOGNIZE THEM.
ON IT.

THEY'RE COMBINERS. WITH THE LARGER ONES, YOU CAN SEE THE—AROUND THE WAIST AND SHOULDERS? YOU CAN SEE THE SEGMENTATION.
THEY'VE GOT ALT MODES, THEY'RE ARMED AND THEY CAN COMBINE. THEY'RE DECEPTICONS, AREN'T THEY? MINIATURE DECEPTICONS.
"MINICONS," ANYONE?
NO?
SUIT YOURSELVES.

INTERESTING.
WHAT? WHAT AM I MISSING?
I HATE IT WHEN YOU DO THIS.
THEY'RE GIVING OFF SOME VERY FAMILIAR READINGS. IN FACT...

...WHOEVER THEY ARE, I THINK THEY FOLLOWED US—HITCHED A RIDE IN THE LOST LIGHT'S QUANTUM SLIPSTREAM WHEN WE JUMPED HERE. THEY'RE STEEPED IN DISPLACEMENT ENERGY.
IT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY NONE OF THEM ARE DESIGNED FOR A MARINE—
AMAZING! I WAS ABOUT TO SAY THE SAME THING. THE OLD QUANTUM SLIPSTREAM TRICK, EH? I'LL BE DAMNED.
FOR A MARINE ENVIRONMENT. EXACTLY.

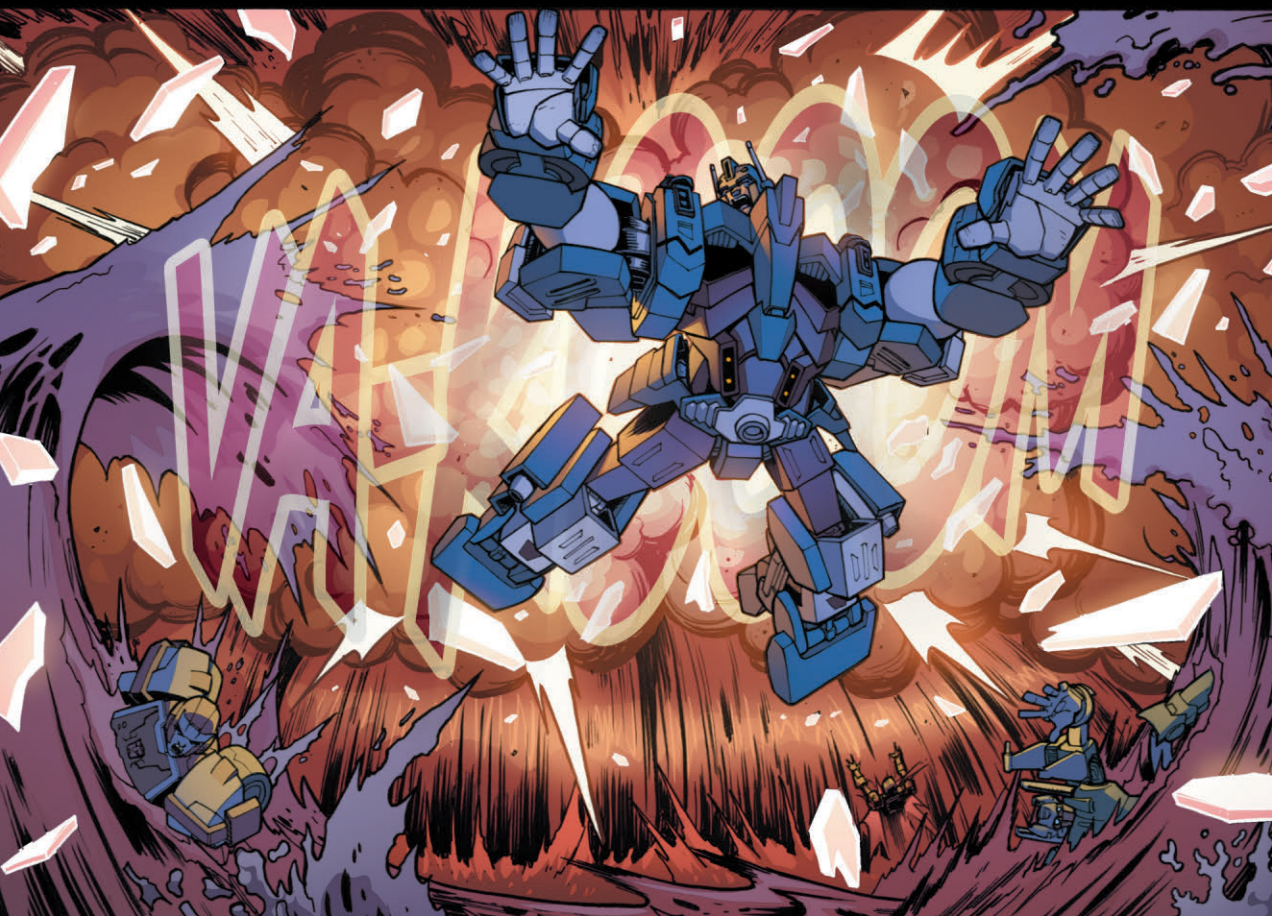
SEE? YOU AND ME—
TNK
—SIMPATICO.
OPEN COMMS, BLASTER. I'M GOING TO TALK TO THEM.

MY NAME IS ULTRA MAGNUS, DULY APPOINTED—
WAIT.
OLD HABITS.
MY NAME IS ULTRA MAGNUS. I'M A CYBERTRONIAN. AN AUTOBOT.
NOT A DECEPTICON.

AS ACTING CAPTAIN OF THE *LOST LIGHT*, I ASK THAT YOU IDENTIFY YOURSELF BY RACE-NAME AND SPECIES CODE.
I REPEAT, WE NEED A RACE-NAME AND A SPECIES CODE.
PERHAPS YOU'RE AFFILIATED WITH THE ***GALACTIC COUNCIL*** OR THE ***BLACK BLOCK CONSORTIA?***

EITHER WAY, WE MEAN YOU NO HARM. WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FRIEND– ***METROPLEX–*** THAT'S ALL.
WE AUTOBOTS ARE MECHANICALS, JUST LIKE YOU. WE PASS THE ***AMBUS TEST.****
*A UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED QUESTION-SET DESIGNED TO DETECT SENTIENCE IN MECHANICAL LIFEFORMS.

...
NOTHING.
PERCEPTOR, IF THEY ***WERE*** AGGRESSIVE, BUT WERE ***DISORIENTED*** FROM THE QUANTUM JUMP, HOW LONG, ROUGHLY, WOULD IT TAKE BEFORE THEY–?


VAROOM

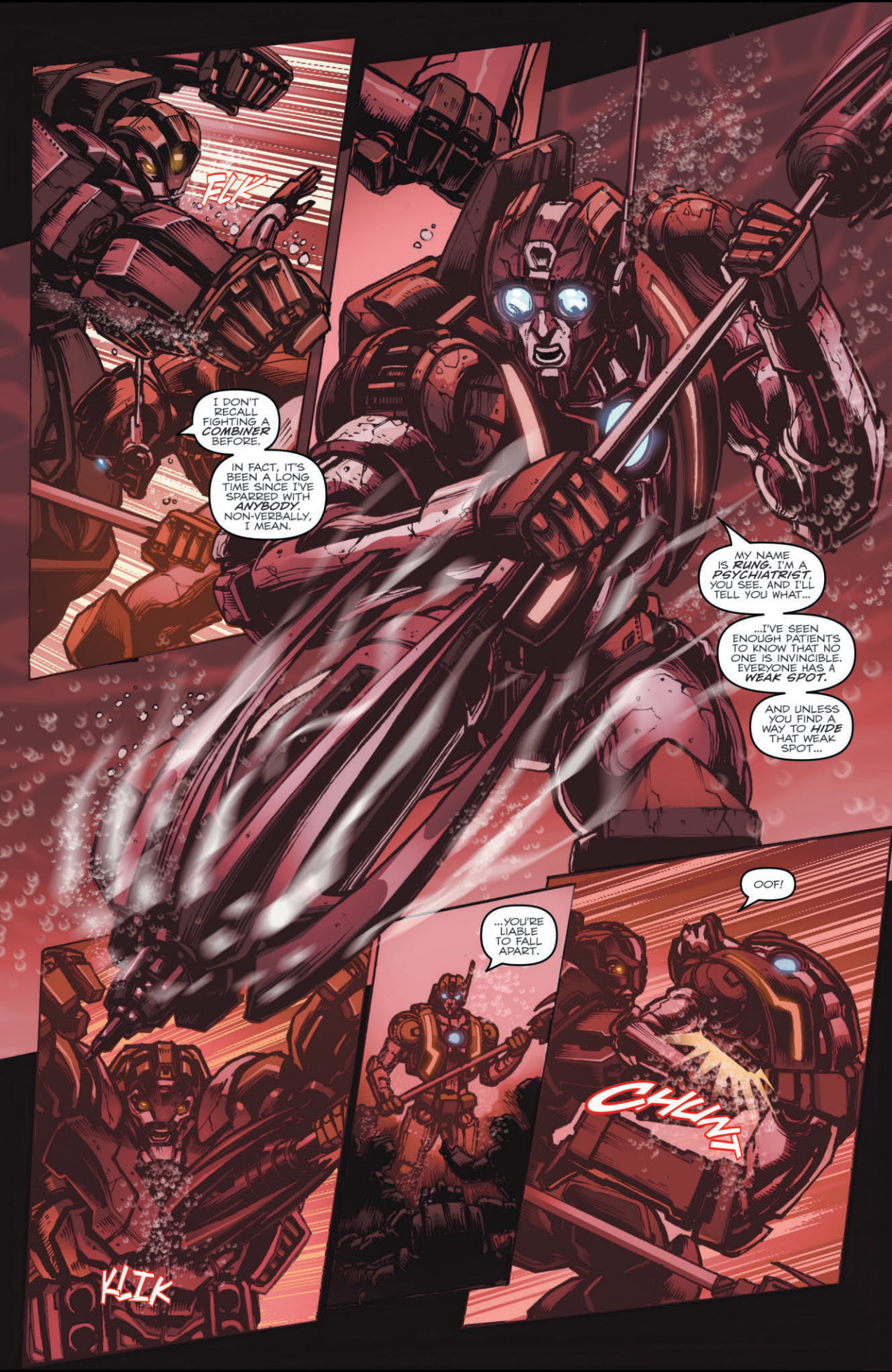
CYBERTRON.
THE CITY OF IACON.
BOSS, I CAN'T LIE TA YA—
—SHINY NEW BODY OR NOT, YA LOOK TERRIBLE.
THANKS, RATTRAP. APPRECIATED.
ANY WORD ON CASUALTIES?
Y'CN SEE SCOOP'S, UH, DIGGIN' 'ROUND—
—HE GOT HIS CONSTRUCTION PATROL UP AN' RUNNIN'. BUT HE'S... UH, HE'S A LITTLE UNHAPPY WIT'CHA, BOSS.
ANYWAYS. LOOKS LIKE WHATEVER THAT—THAT WAVE WAS...
...IT HIT SOME O' US WORSE'N UDDERS.
ANY RHYME OR REASON?
NAW, THOUGHT IT MIGHTA BEEN A CASE WHERE, LIKE, GUYS WHAT WERE CONSTRUCTED COLD GOT HIT HARDER OR SOMETHIN'... BUT NAW.
LOOKS RANDOM.
YEAH, OF COURSE IT WOULD. THAT'S SO MUCH WORSE, AFTER ALL...
STARSCREAM!

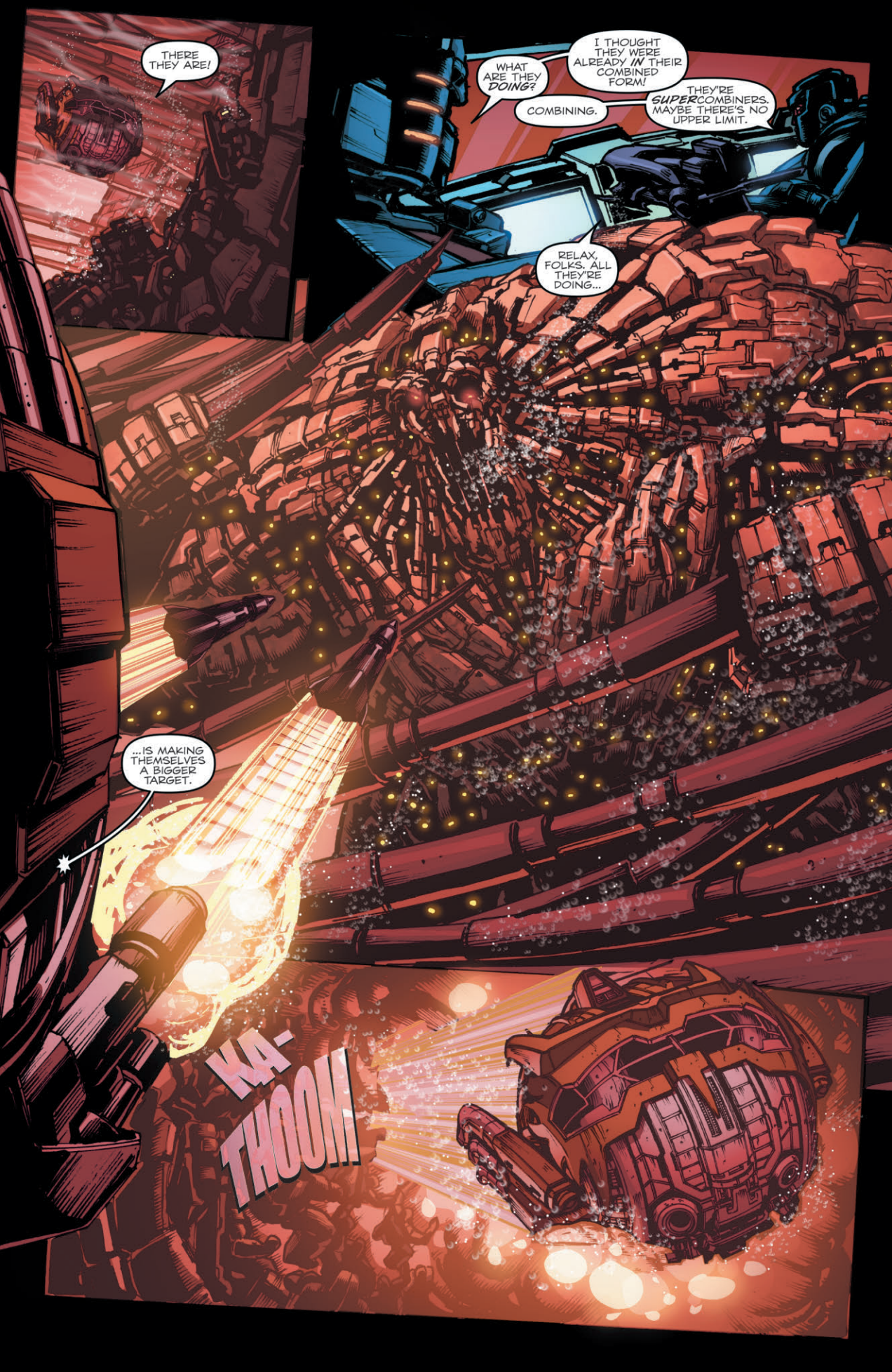
YOU!
YOU WERE THE CHOSEN ONE!
THE ONE WHO WAS GOING TO PROTECT US.
YOUR VERY PRESENCE HAS CONDEMNED THIS CITY.
HEY—HEY! I'M DOING MY BEST!
SCOOP... NOT NOW!
THE BURIED LEGENDS FORETELL—THE WORSHIPPERS OF LIGHT SHALL TURN TO DARK!
AND WHAT IS MORE LIGHT THAN A STAR, AND WHAT IS DARKER THAN—
—THIS!?
STARSCREAM WAS AT THE CENTER OF THIS... AND HE HAS BEEN MARKED.
MARKED BY PRIMUS HIMSELF, FOR THE HELL HE HAS BROUGHT UPON US. NOW—
—WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?
I... I...
HEY, GO EASY ON 'IM. NOBODY'S POIFECT.
AN' IF DIS MEANS DAT WE NEED A NEW CHOSEN ONE, WELL, WE'LL FIGGER IT OUT. RIGHT, BOSS...?
WHAT THIS MEANS—
OH, I KNOWS WHAT IT MEANS. IT MEANS...
...YER RUNNIN' OUTTA TIME

THE LOST LIGHT.
OUTSIDE THE BRIDGE.
MAGNUS!
IF YOU'RE ABOUT TO TELL ME THAT WE'RE UNDER ATTACK, SKIDS, I'M WAY AHEAD OF YOU.
THE BRIDGE IS FLOODED.
THEY'RE AMMONITES! THE 'BOTS ATTACKING THE SHIP—THEY'RE CALLED AMMONITES! THEY SNUCK ON BOARD A FEW MONTHS AGO...*
I KNEW THEY WERE FAMILIAR! THEY DISGUISED THEMSELVES AS THUNDERCLASH'S FIRST OFFICER...
YEAH, THEY'RE LIKE SUPERCOMBINERS OR SOMETHING—THEY CAN MIX AND MATCH AND ALL SORTS OF WHO-KNOWS-WHAT. PRIMUS KNOWS WHY THEY'RE MAD AT US...
WE CAN'T STAY INSIDE THE LOST LIGHT—WE'RE TOO BIG A TARGET. WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE THE BATTLE OUTSIDE, EVEN IF IT MEANS GOING HAND-TO-HAND.
WE'VE GOT WAVERIDER ON BOARD, PLUS AQUASTAR AND HALF THE HYDROBOTS. THEY'LL BE IN THEIR ELEMENT. EVERYONE ELSE WILL HAVE TO—
SINK OR SWIM. SAW THAT ONE COMING.
*RECOUNTED IN MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #22

WE SHOULD BREAK OUT THE MOBILE REPAIR BAYS—
—THEY'RE UNDERWATER-COMPATIBLE.
WE COULD ALWAYS... NO.
WHAT?
WE COULD ALWAYS USE THE RODPOD.
ACTUALLY, I TAKE IT BACK. HE'D KILL US.
THE "RODPOD"?
"IF YOU SO MUCH AS TOUCH IT WITH YOUR REFLECTION, I WILL KICK YOU OFF MY SHIP."
HE SAID THAT, GETAWAY. THAT'S WHAT HE SAID. THOSE EXACT WORDS, IN THAT EXACT ORDER.
I'M SORRY, THE "ROD" "POD"?
WHO'S UP FOR A SWIM?
WHIRL!
LAST ONE IN'S A—WAITAMINUTE. WHERE ARE YOU LOT GOING?
SHUTTLE BAY 4.
THE RODPOD?
AT LAST.
HE KNOWS I HATE THE THING; IF IT GETS DAMAGED, HE'LL THINK I'VE DONE IT ON PURPOSE.
NAH, HE HASN'T TOUCHED IT FOR AGES. YOU KNOW WHAT HE'S LIKE: HE OBSESSES OVER SOMETHING, THEN GETS BORED.
CAN SOMEBODY PLEASE TELL ME WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT?
SHUTTLE BAY FOUR
AND THIS GUY IS YOUR LEADER.

DOUBLE BACK AND PROTECT THE SHIP. THE MINICONS ARE CONCENTRATING THEIR FIRE ON THE ROOF.
THE *FUEL QUILLS*... THEY KNOW WE'D BE CRIPPLED WITHOUT THEM.


FLIK
I DON'T RECALL FIGHTING A COMBINER BEFORE.
IN FACT, IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE SPARRED WITH ANYBODY. NON-VERBALLY, I MEAN.
MY NAME IS RUNG. I'M A PSYCHIATRIST, YOU SEE. AND I'LL TELL YOU WHAT...
...I'VE SEEN ENOUGH PATIENTS TO KNOW THAT NO ONE IS INVINCIBLE. EVERYONE HAS A WEAK SPOT.
AND UNLESS YOU FIND A WAY TO HIDE THAT WEAK SPOT...
OOF!
...YOU'RE LIABLE TO FALL APART.
CHUNT
KLIK


THERE THEY ARE!
WHAT ARE THEY DOING?
I THOUGHT THEY WERE ALREADY IN THEIR COMBINED FORM!
COMBINING.
THEY'RE SUPERCOMBINERS. MAYBE THERE'S NO UPPER LIMIT.
RELAX, FOLKS. ALL THEY'RE DOING...
...IS MAKING THEMSELVES A BIGGER TARGET.
KA-THOOM

THE DEAD UNIVERSE.
SO RODIMUS, THIS QUEST OF YOURS.
IT SEEMS TO ME—
UH-HUH.
—THAT YOU THOUGHT YOU'D JUST HOP ON A SPACESHIP AND LEAVE EVERYONE ELSE TO FIX THE MESS ON CYBERTRON.
YEAH, IF YOU EVER NEED ANY HELP HIDING THAT DISAPPROVAL...
HEY, I'M NOT JUDGING!
YOU ARE JUDGING.
ORION, HE IS JUDGING.
STOP JUDGING, HARDHEAD.
IT'S NOT LIKE WE HAVEN'T BEEN BUSY.
IT'S NOT LIKE I'VE SPENT THE WHOLE TIME SPRAYPAINTING...
WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT—
WE'VE FACED DOWN SOME PRETTY SIGNIFICANT THREATS, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
PERSONAL QUESTION: WERE YOU CONSTRUCTED COLD?
AS IT HAPPENS, YES.
WELL THERE YOU ARE, THEN!
A LITTLE WHILE BACK, YOU NEARLY DIED.* AM I RIGHT?
YOUR SPARK STARTED SHRINKING AND IT WAS AWFUL AND YOU NEARLY DIED.
WE STOPPED THAT HAPPENING. ME AND MY CREW. WE SAVED YOUR LIFE.
*TRANSFORMERS: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE #20.

FINE. THANK YOU. BUT IF ORION ASKED YOU—
YOU'RE WELCOME. DON'T MENTION IT.
—IF ORION ASKED YOU TO GO BACK TO CYBERTRON AND TAKE CHARGE, YOU'D DO THAT?
UM—
IF ORION SAID TO YOU, "IT'S NOT WORKING OUT, BEST EFFORTS AND ALL THAT, BUT BUMBLEBEE IS STEPPING DOWN," YOU'D TURN THE LOST LIGHT AROUND AND TAKE OVER BACK HOME?
COURSE I WOULD! WHAT ARE YOU EVEN SAYING? COURSE I WOULD!
I HAVE EVERY FAITH IN BUMBLEBEE. I HAVE EVERY FAITH IN YOU TOO, RODIMUS.
IN FACT, YOU AND I SHOULD TALK ABOUT YOUR QUEST. I'M SURE YOU'VE MADE INCREDIBLE PROGRESS.
...
I MEAN, HOW WAS I TO KNOW THAT THEY'D PUT STARSCREAM IN CHARGE?
ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS, MANIPULATIVE DECEPTICONS OF ALL TIME, AND HE GETS HIS OWN FAN CLUB!
IT'S NOT WITHOUT PRECEDENT.
THE DECEPTICONS WOULDN'T EVEN EXIST WERE IT NOT FOR A CHARISMATIC INDIVIDUAL WITH A TEMPLATE FOR CHANGE.
YEAH, BUT MEGATRON WAS KICKING AGAINST A CORRUPT SYSTEM. YOU HAD THE SENATE, THE FUNCTIONISTS...
THE PRIMES.
I WASN'T GONNA GO THERE...

NOVA, NOMINUS, SENTINEL—AND TO THINK FOR A TIME I ACTUALLY BELIEVED IN ZETA...
I CAN SEE WHY YOU WANTED YOUR OLD NAME BACK. TALK ABOUT A ROGUES' GALLERY.
CYCLONUS—YOU SERVED UNDER NOVA PRIME FOR SIX MILLION YEARS. WHAT WAS HE LIKE?
WAS HE ALWAYS A PSYCHOTIC MECH SUPREMACIST, OR WAS IT SOMETHING HE HAD TO WORK UP TO?
WHO'S JUDGING NOW?
OH MAN, YOU'RE LEAKING! THE MICROFILAMENTS IN YOUR FACIAL PLATING, THEY'RE—
IT'S THE HEAT.
CYCLONUS, IT'S FREEZING.
YOU'RE CLEARLY NOT WELL. LET ME—
DON'T TOUCH ME.
IT'S OKAY, I'M MEDICALLY TRAINED.
DON'T.
I'D LISTEN TO HIM, IF I WERE YOU...
...AND THEN I'D LISTEN TO ME.
NIGHTBEAT?!
LISTEN—BECAUSE WHAT I'VE GOT TO SAY...

"...WILL CHANGE EVERYTHING."
CYBERTRON.
AT THE FEET OF THE NECROTITAN.
OKAY, OKAY... ANYBODY WANT TO THROW OUT A GUESS?
WHAT WAS THAT WAVE OF... WHATEVER IT WAS?
WHY DID EVERYBODY FALL!?
FRENZY...? SPEAK TO ME, BUDDY.
COME ON! SPEAK! BE OKAY!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
THAT, RUMBLE, IS THE QUESTION.
NO OFFENSE, SOUNDWAVE—
—BUT WHO CARES? LOOK WHAT THAT TITAN DID TO US! HOW LONG DO YOU WANT TO STARE AT IT?
I'M WITH THE DOG—
CAT.
—WHATEVER. THIS THING GOES DOWN OR—OR...

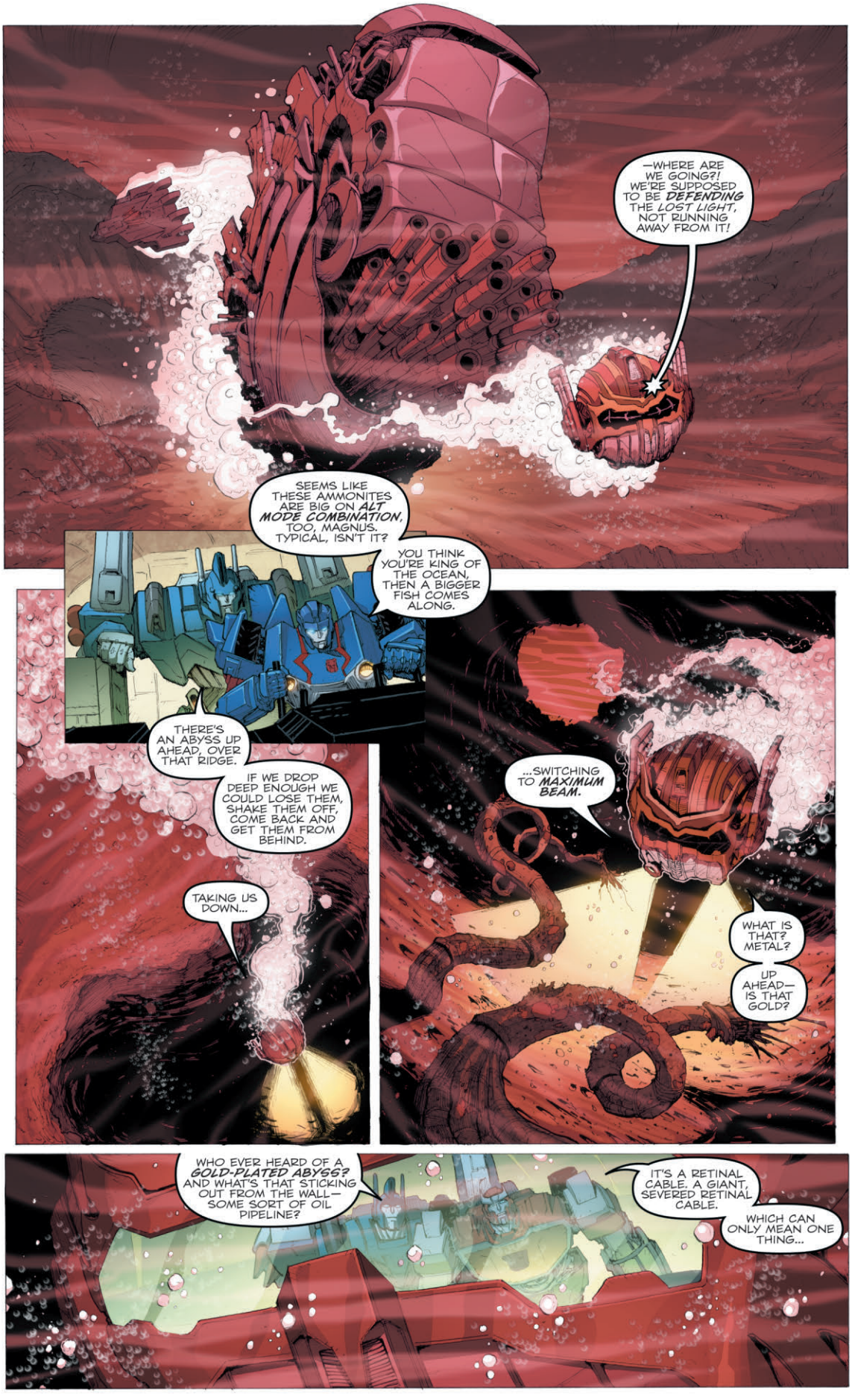
OR, WHAT? OR WE DO?
THE TITAN NEARLY DESTROYED US BY STANDING STILL. SO, YEAH— WE STOP IT OR DIE TRYING.
WE'RE AUTOBOTS, BUMBLEBEE. THAT'S THE WAY WE DO THINGS.
PROWL—WE NEED INTEL. JUST HITTING THINGS...
...WELL, YOU USED TO BE THE LOGICAL ONE.
THAT DOESN'T SEEM LOGICAL TO ME.
FINE.
SOUNDWAVE— CAN YOU PICK ANYTHING UP IN THE CITY?
NO. THE TITAN STILL BLOCKS ALL TRANSMISSIONS. BUT...
...WAIT...
...I DO HEAR SOMETHING.
...SOMETHING I HAVE NEVER HEARD BEFORE—

"—I HEAR MEGATRON... SCREAMING."
AUUUUGHHH!
AHHH! AH!
AH... AH... HAH.
I GATHER THIS EXPERIENCE IS AN UNPLEASANT ONE.
I... AH... DO FEEL PAIN. IT IS... NOT PLEASANT.
BUT YOU...
...YOU WOULD SAY THAT ABOUT ANY FEELING.
HM. THERE IS STILL TIME TO JOIN ME, MEGATRON—TO SEE YOUR DREAM FULFILLED.

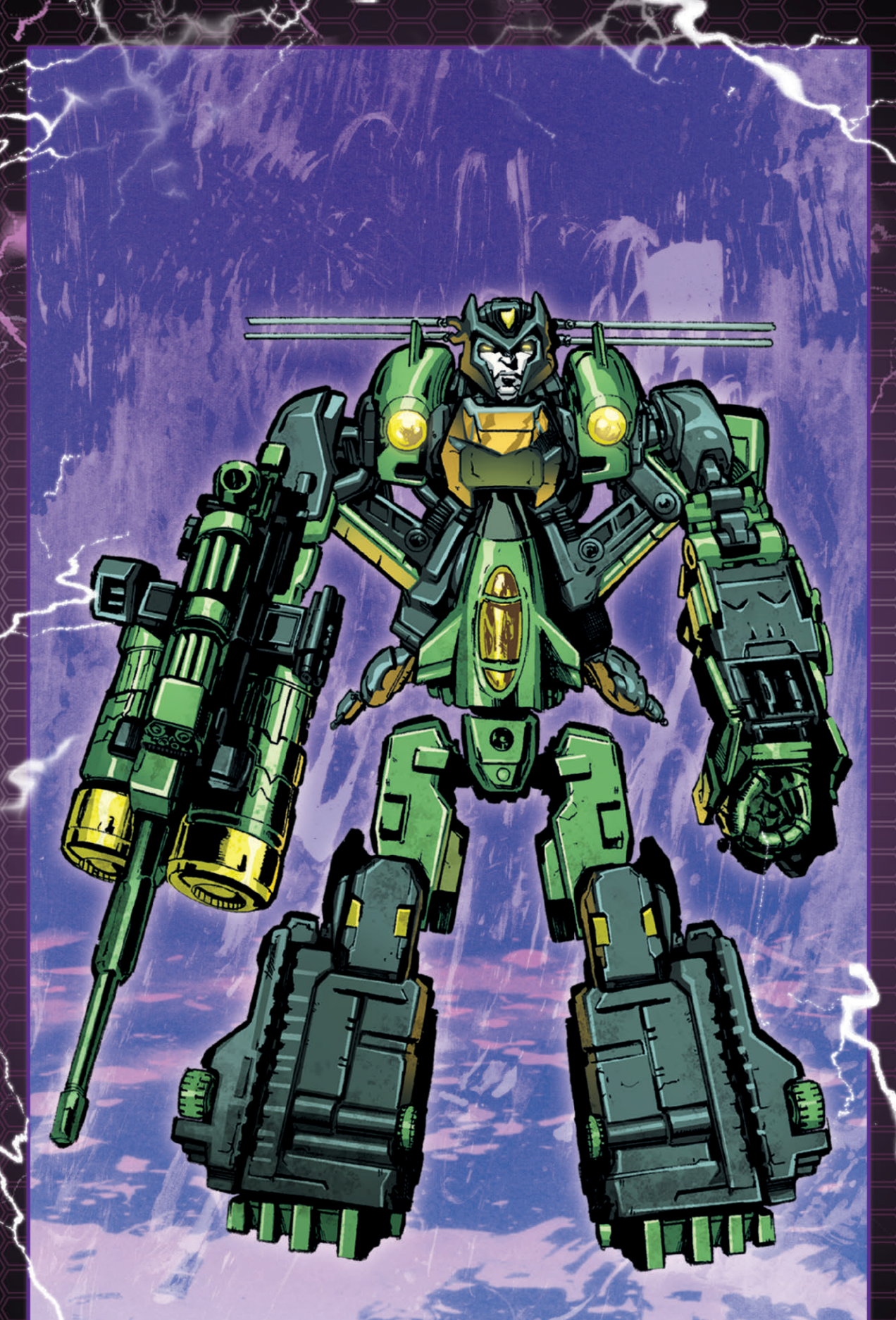
WHY...
...WHY WOULD I EVER JOIN YOU...?
TO WIN YOUR WAR FOR EQUITY WITH THE AUTOBOTS.
I HAVE AT MY DISPOSAL A METHOD TO GUARANTEE A VICTORY... FOR ALL TIME.
AND IN EXCHANGE... I SERVE YOU?
I SERVE YOUR—YOUR UNDEAD ABOMINATION?
I AM NOT—
NO.
THE SITUATION IS MORE COMPLEX THAN YOU BELIEVE, MEGATRON. METALHAWK AND I BOTH HAVE ROLES TO PLAY, AS DO... OTHERS.
NOVA PRIME AND GALVATRON LIVE, DESPITE YOUR OWN CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS.
I WILL RETURN THEM TO THEIR PLACE AS RULERS OF CYBERTRON.
AM I SUPPOSED TO BE... SHOCKED?
YOU KNOW I WOULD NEVER HELP TO REESTABLISH THE LINEAGE OF PRIMES.
BUT YOU... YOU HAVE NO INTEREST IN ANCIENT ROYALTY.

INDEED. THEY ARE A MEANS TO AN END. THE TRUE STAKES ARE MUCH HIGHER.
WE KNOW EACH OTHER TOO WELL. AND YOU HAVE REVEALED TOO MUCH.
YOU NEED ME.
NO, LORD MEGATRON.
YOU ARE MERELY EGO AND A GUN...
...AND I HAVE GUNS OF MY OWN.
I BUILT YOUR BODY—LIKE THE BODY BEFORE IT. IN IT, I PLACED—
A SPACE BRIDGE.
INDEED. A METHOD TO CROSS GREAT DISTANCES WITH BUT A SINGLE STEP.
WITH THE ORES I HAVE GATHERED—
—SEEDS PLANTED AND HARVESTED—
—THOSE DISTANCES WILL NO LONGER BE CONFINED TO ONE UNIVERSE.
I SOUGHT TO OFFER YOU A CHANCE... BUT UPON FURTHER REFLECTION...
...WE DO KNOW EACH OTHER TOO WELL.
AND ALL I NEED IS FOR YOU TO CHANGE MODES FROM GUN...

...TO WELCOME MAT.
AAAAGGHHH!
AT LAST!
THE REIGN OF NOVA PRIME BEGINS AGAIN!
"WHAT ARE WE DOING—"


—WHERE ARE WE GOING?! WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE *DEFENDING* THE *LOST LIGHT*, NOT RUNNING AWAY FROM IT!
SEEMS LIKE THESE AMMONITES ARE BIG ON *ALT MODE COMBINATION*, TOO, MAGNUS. TYPICAL, ISN'T IT?
YOU THINK YOU'RE KING OF THE OCEAN, THEN A BIGGER FISH COMES ALONG.
THERE'S AN ABYSS UP AHEAD, OVER THAT RIDGE.
IF WE DROP DEEP ENOUGH WE COULD LOSE THEM, SHAKE THEM OFF, COME BACK AND GET THEM FROM BEHIND.
TAKING US DOWN...
...SWITCHING TO *MAXIMUM BEAM*.
WHAT IS THAT? METAL?
UP AHEAD— IS THAT GOLD?
WHO EVER HEARD OF A *GOLD-PLATED ABYSS?* AND WHAT'S THAT STICKING OUT FROM THE WALL— SOME SORT OF OIL PIPELINE?
IT'S A RETINAL CABLE. A GIANT, SEVERED RETINAL CABLE.
WHICH CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING...

...WE'VE JUST FOUND METROPLEX.
INTO THE ABYSS
DARK CYBERTRON CHAPTER 4



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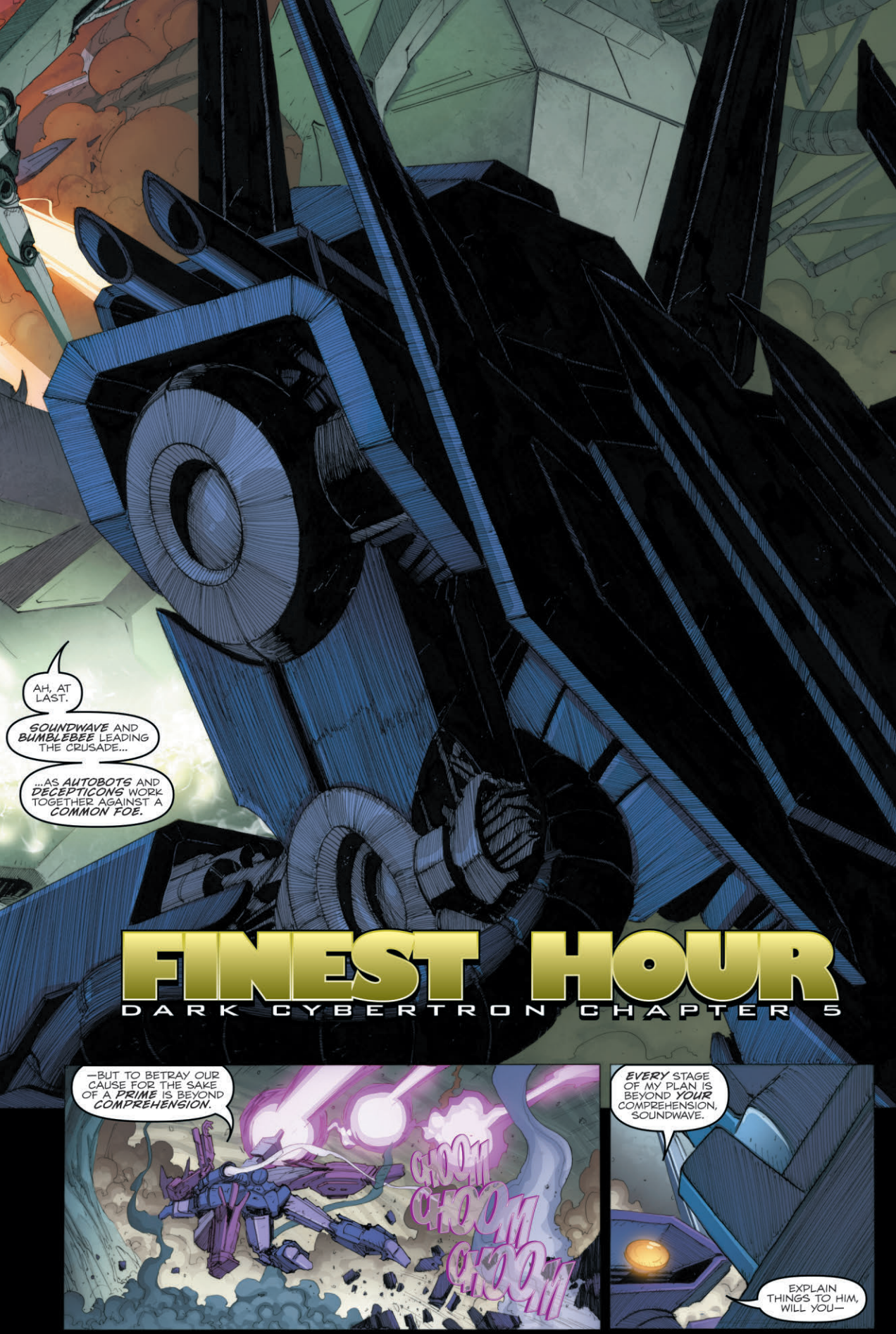
CHAPTER 5

Art by: ROBERT GILL and LIVIO RAMONDELLI • Colors by: ROMULO FAJARDO, JR. and LIVIO RAMONDELLI
Letters by: TOM B. LONG

Cover by: CASEY W. COLLER • Colors by: JOANA LAFUENTE

AAAAIIIGH!
THERE IS NO USE IN SCREAMING, MEGATRON.
NO ONE CARES IF YOU ARE IN PAIN.
THE SPACE BRIDGE IS OPENED.
NOVA PRIME AND GALVATRON RETURN TO RECLAIM CYBERTRON'S THRONE...
...THE NEW GOLDEN AGE BEGINS HERE.
YOU SHOULD BE HONORED I ALLOWED YOU AS IMPORTANT A ROLE AS I HAVE.
AARRRGH!
RAARGH!
SHOCKWAVE— IGNORE THIS FAILURE'S BLEATING—
—AND LEND A HAND TO YOUR NEW MASTER!
OH, I INTEND TO, LORD NOVA...
...BUT I ANTICIPATE MY HAND WILL PRESENTLY HAVE OTHER BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO.

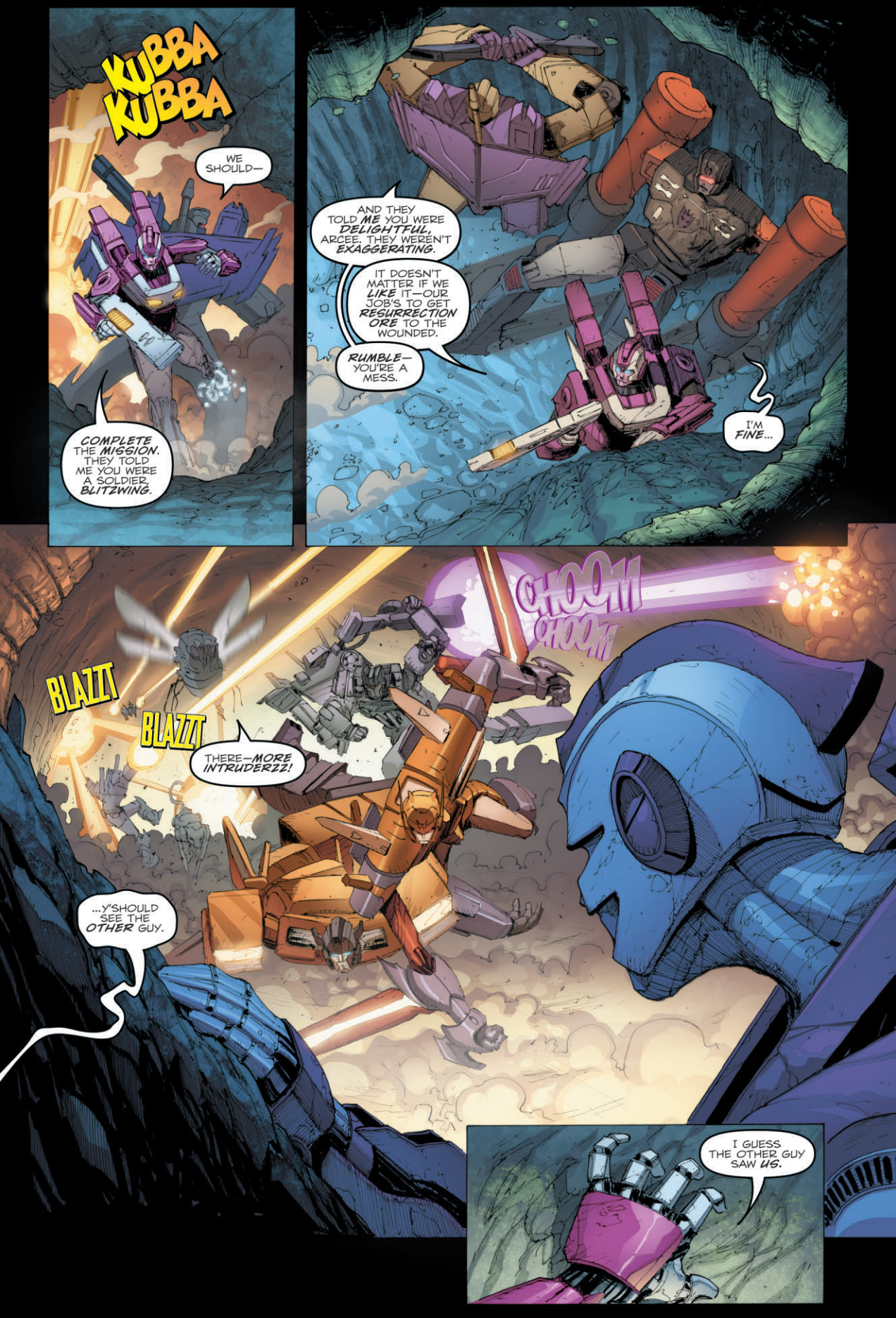
KRA-THOOM
BRAKKA BRAKKA
THROUGH THE WALL, EVERYBODY—WE'RE MOVING!
AND WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING, SHOCKWAVE—IT ENDS NOW!
ZZZK
DECEPTICONS, AUTOBOTS—OPERATION: COLLABORATION!
KRACK
RUMBLLLRRRR
HOW CHARMINGLY PREDICTABLE.
CHOOM
SHOCKWAVE—I HAVE NEVER THOUGHT HIGHLY OF YOU—
FA-WOOSH


AH, AT LAST.
SOUNDWAVE AND BUMBLEBEE LEADING THE CRUSADE...
...AS AUTOBOTS AND DECEPTICONS WORK TOGETHER AGAINST A COMMON FOE.
FINEST HOUR
DARK CYBERTRON CHAPTER 5
—BUT TO BETRAY OUR CAUSE FOR THE SAKE OF A PRIME IS BEYOND COMPREHENSION.
CHOOM CHOOM CHOOM
EVERY STAGE OF MY PLAN IS BEYOND YOUR COMPREHENSION, SOUNDWAVE.
EXPLAIN THINGS TO HIM, WILL YOU—

KAKOOM
—METALHAWK.
BUT— HOW?
YOU DIED!
IT'S ME—IT'S BUMBLEBEE!
IF—IF YOU'RE OKAY, WE CAN— WE CAN TURN THINGS AROUND FOR CYBERTRON— LIKE WE WANTED!
YOU LET THEM KILL ME!
YOU GAVE STARSCREAM OUR WORLD!
SASLATCH
SHOCKWAVE GRANTED ME A CHANCE AT RETRIBUTION—
—AND IT BEGINS WITH YOU!

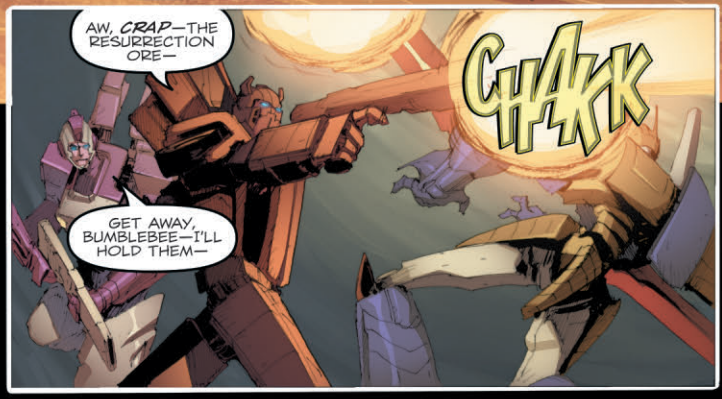
CHAFF
CHAFF
IRONHIDE— IS THAT—?
YEAH, LOOKS LIKE.
WILL YOU AUTOBOTS JUST SHUT UP AND DO SOMETHING?!
YOU THINK WE'RE BAD, YA SHOULDA HEARD THE GUYS THAT WENT OUT ON THE LOST LIGHT.
JUST KEEP ANYONE FROM GETTING THROUGH THE BRIDGE—
—I'LL FREE MEGATRON!
SOUNDS LIKE A TERRIBLE PLAN, SKYWARP—
BAFF BAFF
—BUT I GUESS IT'LL HAVE TA DO!
CRETIN!
YOU PRESUME TO LAY HANDS ON THE CARAPACE OF NOVA PRIME?!
YRAHG
YEAH, WELL— THAT'S A MOUTHFUL FER SOMEBODY I THOUGHT WAS DEAD.
I GUESS YA GOT BETTER.
NO—
—I GOT WORSE.
AW, COME ON.
YOU BEEN AT THIS WORLD-CONQUERIN' NONSENSE FER MILLIONS O' YEARS—

—AN THAT'S THE LEVEL O' DISCOURSE I GOTTA DEAL WITH?
KRUNCH
GET AWAY FROM—
—WHA—?!
CAN'T... CAN'T STAY...
...SOLID...
...GOTTA HOLD TOGETHER.
YOUR TELEPORTATION POWER'S GOIN' HAYWIRE, PAL?
GUESS THAT MEANS I CAN'T HIT YA—
—BUT YOU'RE NOT MUCH USE TO MEGATRON, EITHER.
DAMMIT, DREADWING— YOU USED TO BE ONE OF US—
—YOU WERE LOYAL TO MEGATRON!
KUBBA KUBBA KUBBA
AND WHAT DID LOYALTY GET ME? SHOCKWAVE'S GIVING US ALL SOMETHING BETTER—
—VICTORY!

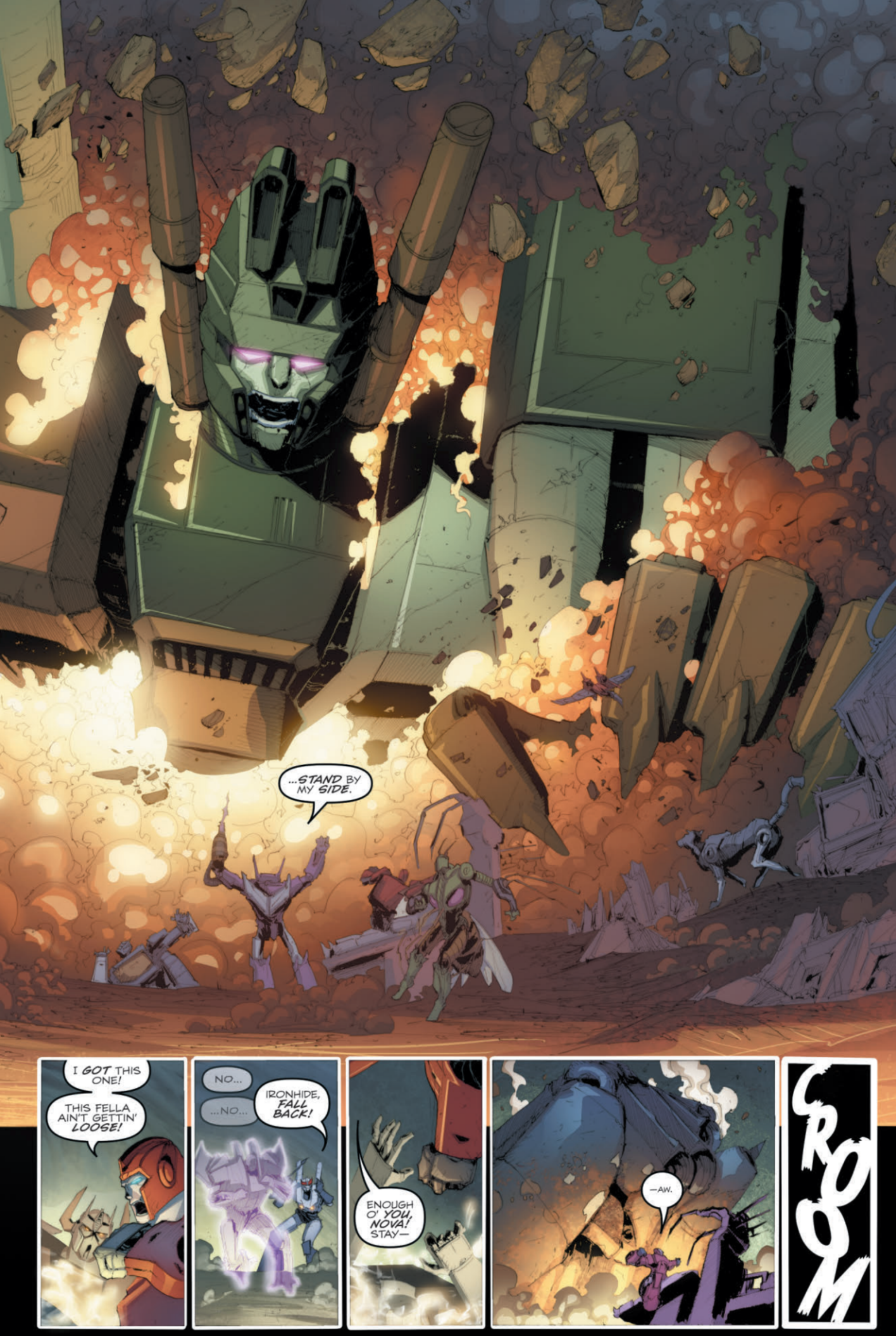

KUBBA KUBBA
WE SHOULD—
COMPLETE THE MISSION. THEY TOLD ME YOU WERE A SOLDIER, BLITZWING.
AND THEY TOLD ME YOU WERE DELIGHTFUL, ARCEE. THEY WEREN'T EXAGGERATING.
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF WE LIKE IT—OUR JOB'S TO GET RESURRECTION ORE TO THE WOUNDED.
RUMBLE—YOU'RE A MESS.
I'M FINE...
CHOOM
CHOOM
BLAZZT
BLAZZT
THERE—MORE INTRUDERZZ!
...Y'SHOULD SEE THE OTHER GUY.
I GUESS THE OTHER GUY SAW US.

ARCEE— STICK TO MISSION PARAMETERS, I'LL HANDLE THIS IDIOT!
WASPINATOR NOT IDIOT!
KZAKK
CHOOM
ENOUGH, SOUNDWAVE.
WASPINATOR— TO ME.
AT ONZZE, MAZZTER!
UNNH...
...IF I... CAN...
...THAT'S...
...THAT'S...
...BETTER.

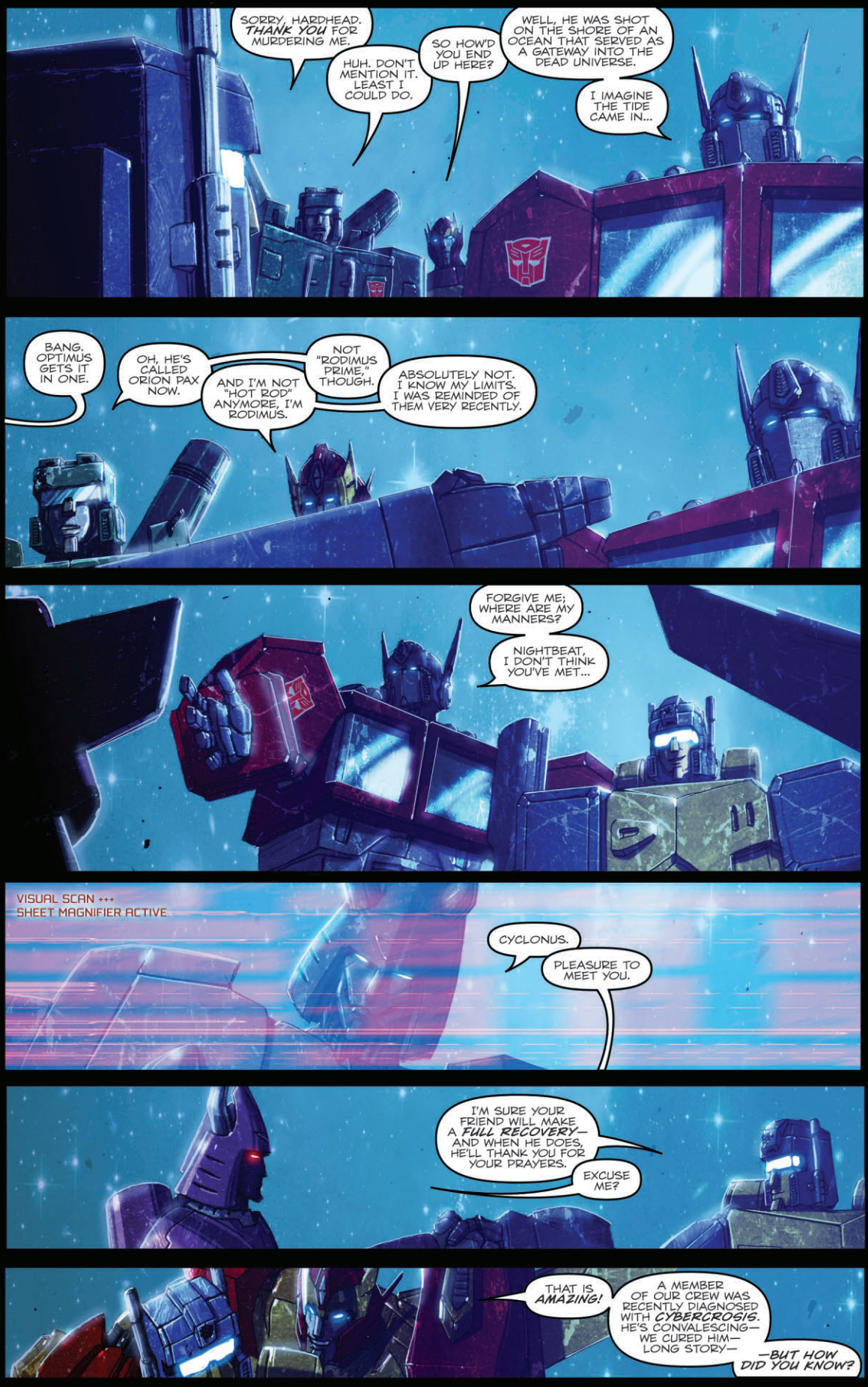
COME ON, METALHAWK!
I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE SOMEWHERE!
BEE—WE NEED YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME!
SHOCKWAVE'S TRYING TO DISTRACT US—DELAY US!
OF COURSE HE IS! HE'S TRYING TO GIVE NOVA PRIME TIME TO ESCAPE!
KZAKK KZAKK
WHY WOULD SHOCKWAVE WANT THAT?
IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE...
YOU CALLED, MY MAZZTER...?
YOUR STAFF MAINTAINS A LINK WITH THE TITAN.
YEZ— BUT—
—ITZZ MIND— RECURZZIVE, ZZCIRCLING IN UPON ITSELF...
...I CAN'T MAKE ZZENZZE OF ITZZ THOUGHTZZ...
INDEED—
—MAKING SENSE OF A SITUATION HAS NEVER BEEN A PROBLEM FOR ME.
NOW, MY TITAN...

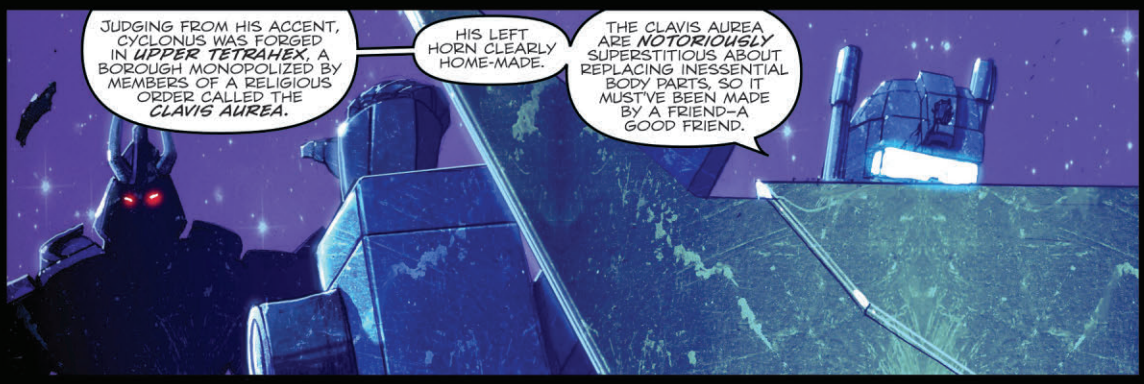

AW, CRAP—THE RESURRECTION ORE—
GET AWAY, BUMBLEBEE—I'LL HOLD THEM—
CHAKK

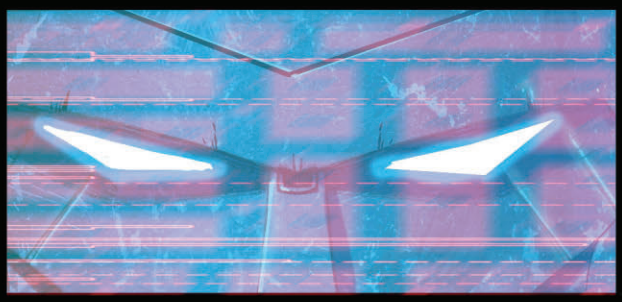
—OFF—
CHAKK CHAKK


...STAND BY MY SIDE.
I GOT THIS ONE!
THIS FELLA AIN'T GETTIN' LOOSE!
NO...
...NO...
IRONHIDE, FALL BACK!
ENOUGH O' YOU, NOVA! STAY—
—AW.
CROOM

NIGHTBEAT! IS IT—IS IT REALLY YOU?
HI, YES, HELLO, IT'S ME...
...WHAT?
YOU'RE STARING AT MY FOREHEAD LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN A FATAL GUNSHOT WOUND BEFORE.
I'M SORRY, GUYS, I CAN'T COMMIT TO THIS.
NIGHTBEAT WAS KILLED FIVE YEARS AGO!
I KNOW—I KILLED HIM! THAT'S MY GUNSHOT WOUND!
TALK ABOUT AWKWARD...
WHAT ARE YOU, A HALLUCINATION?
NO.
ARE YOU?
DON'T BE CLEVER.
GHOST?
MMMMAYBE. DEPENDS ON YOUR DEFINITION...
...I MEAN, I WAS KILLED.
BY SOMEONE STANDING NOT A MILLION MILES AWAY FROM ME NOW, IN FACT...
HEY, YOU ASKED ME TO!
IF YOU EVER DISCOVER YOU'VE BEEN BRAINWASHED INTO BEING A SLEEPER AGENT FOR NOVA PRIME, ASK HARDHEAD TO TAKE CARE OF THE PROBLEM—
—HE'S BRILLIANT AT IT!


SORRY, HARDHEAD. THANK YOU FOR MURDERING ME.
HUH. DON'T MENTION IT. LEAST I COULD DO.
SO HOW'D YOU END UP HERE?
WELL, HE WAS SHOT ON THE SHORE OF AN OCEAN THAT SERVED AS A GATEWAY INTO THE DEAD UNIVERSE.
I IMAGINE THE TIDE CAME IN...
BANG. OPTIMUS GETS IT IN ONE.
OH, HE'S CALLED ORION PAX NOW.
AND I'M NOT "HOT ROD" ANYMORE, I'M RODIMUS.
NOT "RODIMUS PRIME," THOUGH.
ABSOLUTELY NOT. I KNOW MY LIMITS. I WAS REMINDED OF THEM VERY RECENTLY.
FORGIVE ME; WHERE ARE MY MANNERS?
NIGHTBEAT, I DON'T THINK YOU'VE MET...
VISUAL SCAN +++
SHEET MAGNIFIER ACTIVE
CYCLONUS.
PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.
I'M SURE YOUR FRIEND WILL MAKE A FULL RECOVERY— AND WHEN HE DOES, HE'LL THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS.
EXCUSE ME?
THAT IS AMAZING!
A MEMBER OF OUR CREW WAS RECENTLY DIAGNOSED WITH CYBERCROSIS. HE'S CONVALESCING— WE CURED HIM— LONG STORY—
—BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW?

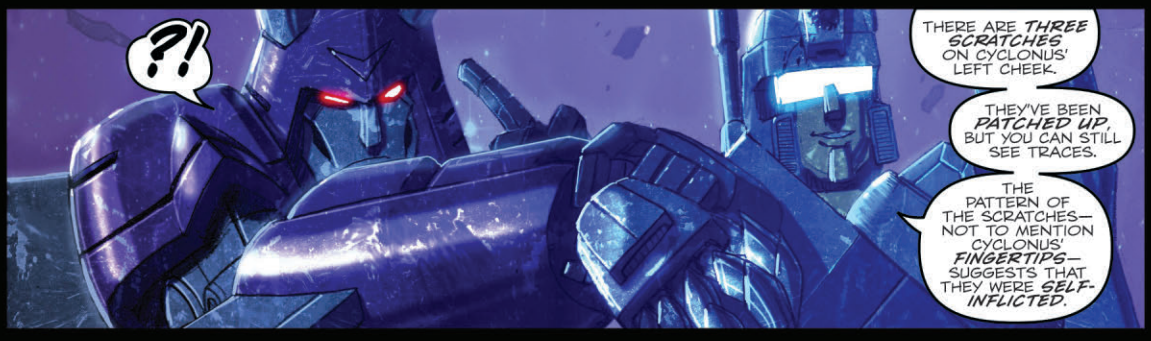

JUDGING FROM HIS ACCENT, CYCLONUS WAS FORGED IN *UPPER TETRAHEX*, A BOROUGH MONOPOLIZED BY MEMBERS OF A RELIGIOUS ORDER CALLED THE *CLAVIS AUREA*.
HIS LEFT HORN CLEARLY HOME-MADE.
THE CLAVIS AUREA ARE *NOTORIOUSLY* SUPERSTITIOUS ABOUT REPLACING INESSENTIAL BODY PARTS, SO IT MUST'VE BEEN MADE BY A FRIEND—A GOOD FRIEND.



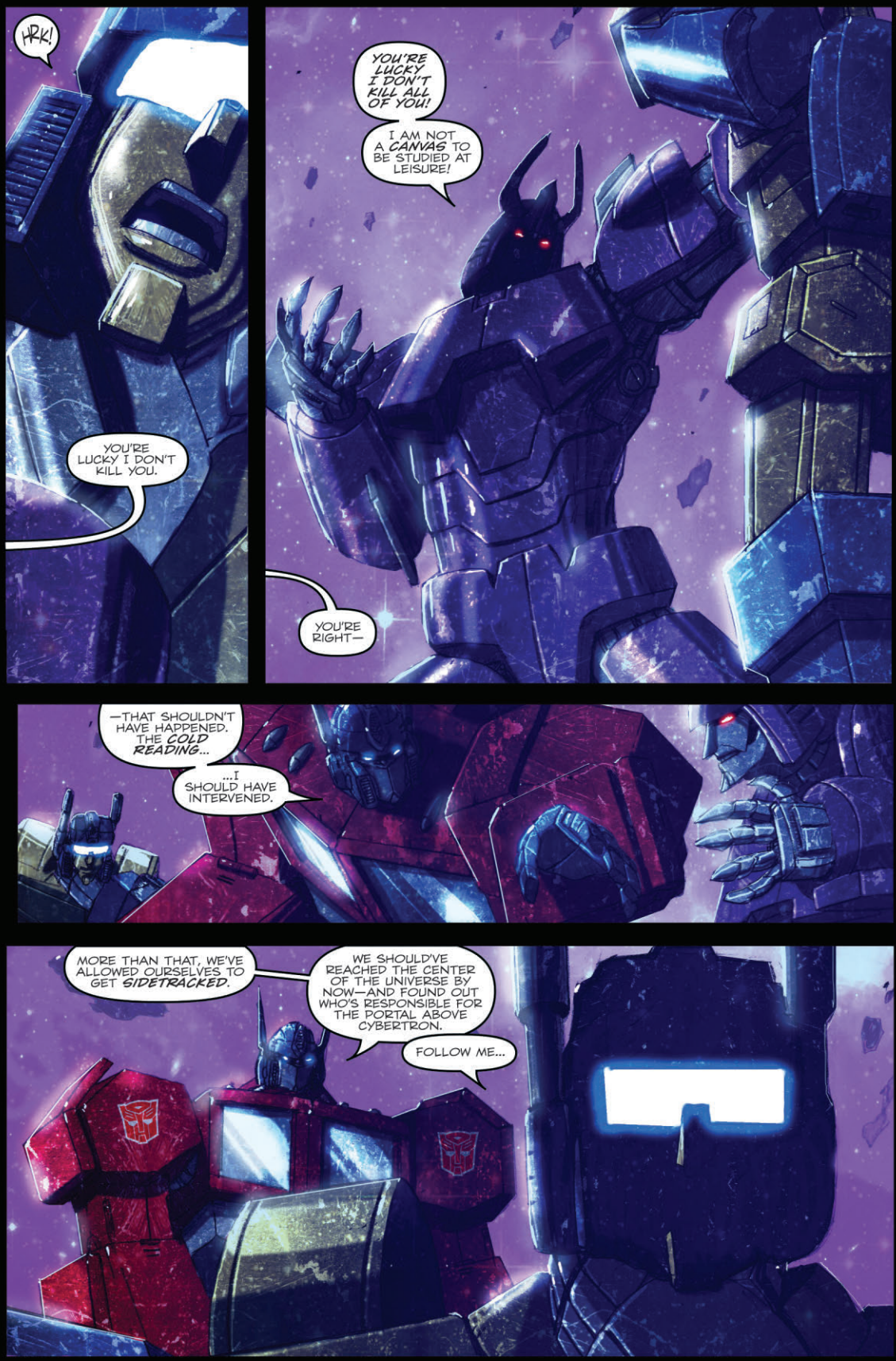
"BUT THAT'S *INCIDENTAL*. FOR THE TRUTH, LOOK AT THE *EYES*.

"THE RIGHT *CORNEAL LENS* IS SLIGHTLY DARKER THAN THE LEFT—THE RESULT OF AN IMBALANCE IN HIS INTERNAL FLUIDS ATTRIBUTABLE TO A RECENTLY DEPLETED STOCK OF *INNERMOST ENERGON*.

"AND YOU ONLY MAKE A DONATION—"


?!
THERE ARE *THREE SCRATCHES* ON CYCLONUS' LEFT CHEEK.
THEY'VE BEEN *PATCHED UP*, BUT YOU CAN STILL SEE TRACES.
THE PATTERN OF THE SCRATCHES—NOT TO MENTION CYCLONUS' *FINGERTIPS*—SUGGESTS THAT THEY WERE *SELF-INFLICTED*.

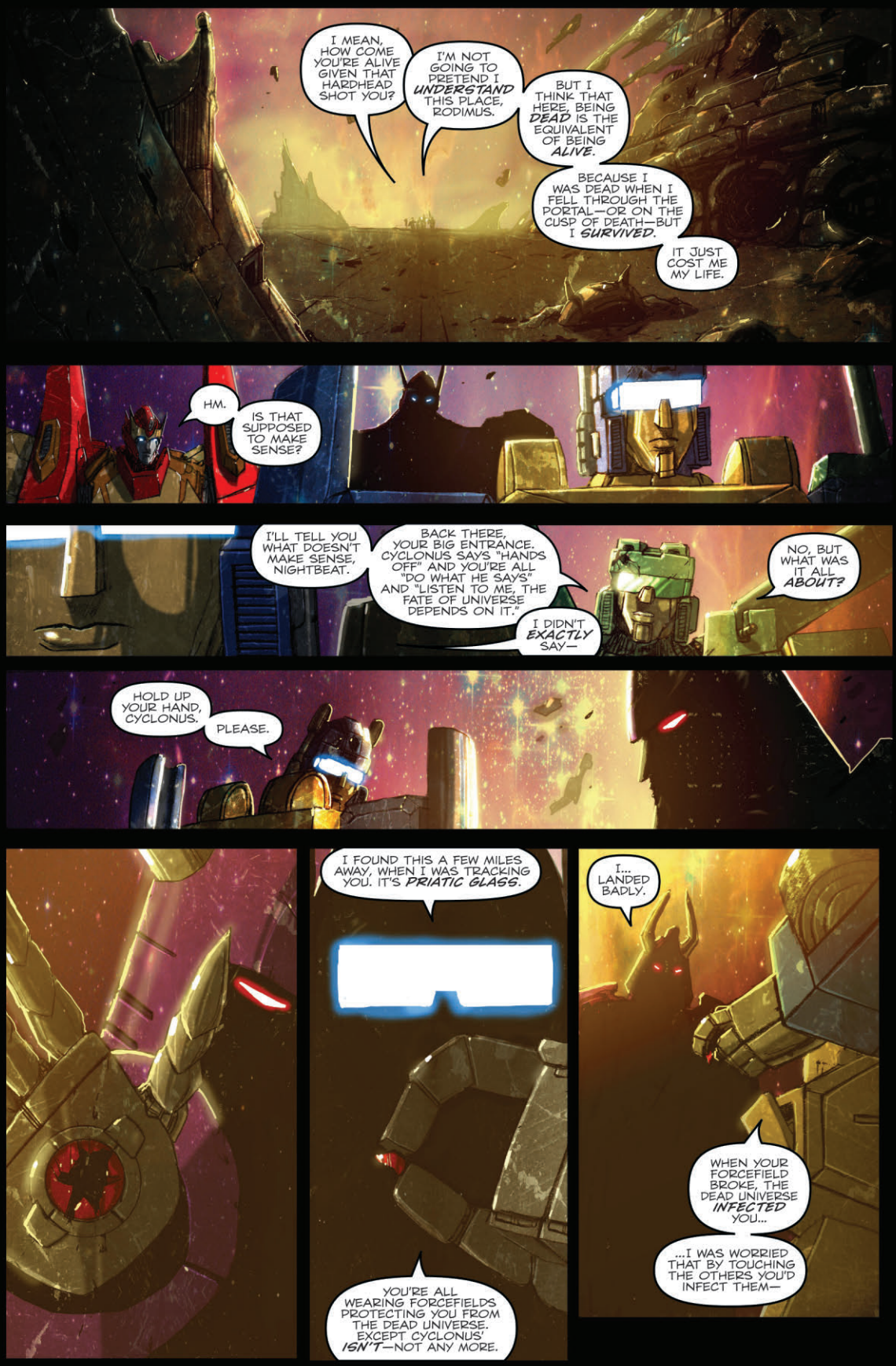
YOU CLEARLY STRUGGLE TO EXPRESS YOURSELF—YOU'VE BARELY SAID A WORD SINCE I ARRIVED, AND YOU RARELY MAKE EYE CONTACT.
I THINK YOU SCRATCHED YOURSELF RATHER THAN TELL TAILGATE YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT HIM.
THE FACT YOU'VE PATCHED UP THE SCRATCH SUGGESTS TAILGATE IS *OKAY*.
IF HE'D DIED, FIXING YOUR FACE WOULD'VE BEEN THE *LAST* THING ON YOUR—

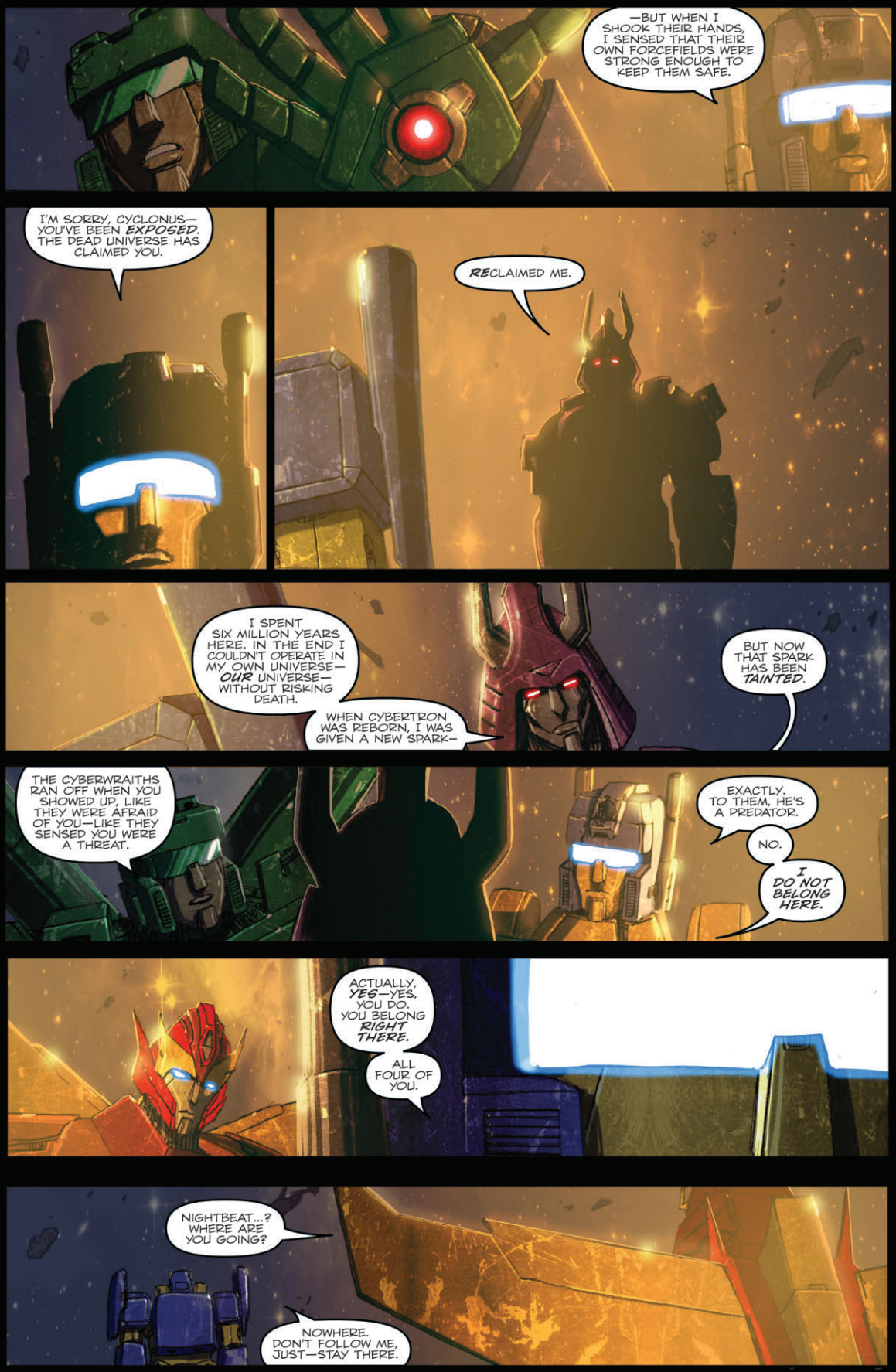

HRK!
YOU'RE LUCKY I DON'T KILL YOU.
YOU'RE LUCKY I DON'T KILL ALL OF YOU!
I AM NOT A CANVAS TO BE STUDIED AT LEISURE!
YOU'RE RIGHT—
—THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED. THE COLD READING...
...I SHOULD HAVE INTERVENED.
MORE THAN THAT, WE'VE ALLOWED OURSELVES TO GET SIDETRACKED.
WE SHOULD'VE REACHED THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE BY NOW—AND FOUND OUT WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PORTAL ABOVE CYBERTRON.
FOLLOW ME...

"...I KNOW THE LAY OF THE LAND."
AUTOBOTS, DECEPTICONS— SOUND OFF—
—I NEED A HEAD COUNT!
WHAT WE NEED IS TA GET OUTTA HERE!
RAVAGE'S DOWN AGAIN, AN'—AN'—
AND WE WILL MOURN THE FALLEN LATER, RUMBLE...
...NOW WE MUST MAKE HASTE.
THE ENEMY HAS AN UNDEAD TITAN ON HIS SIDE—
—I ASSUME YOU HAVE SOMETHING COMPARABLE?
YOU DO HAVE A PLAN THIS TIME, BUMBLEBEE?
YOU.
AH—MEGATRON!

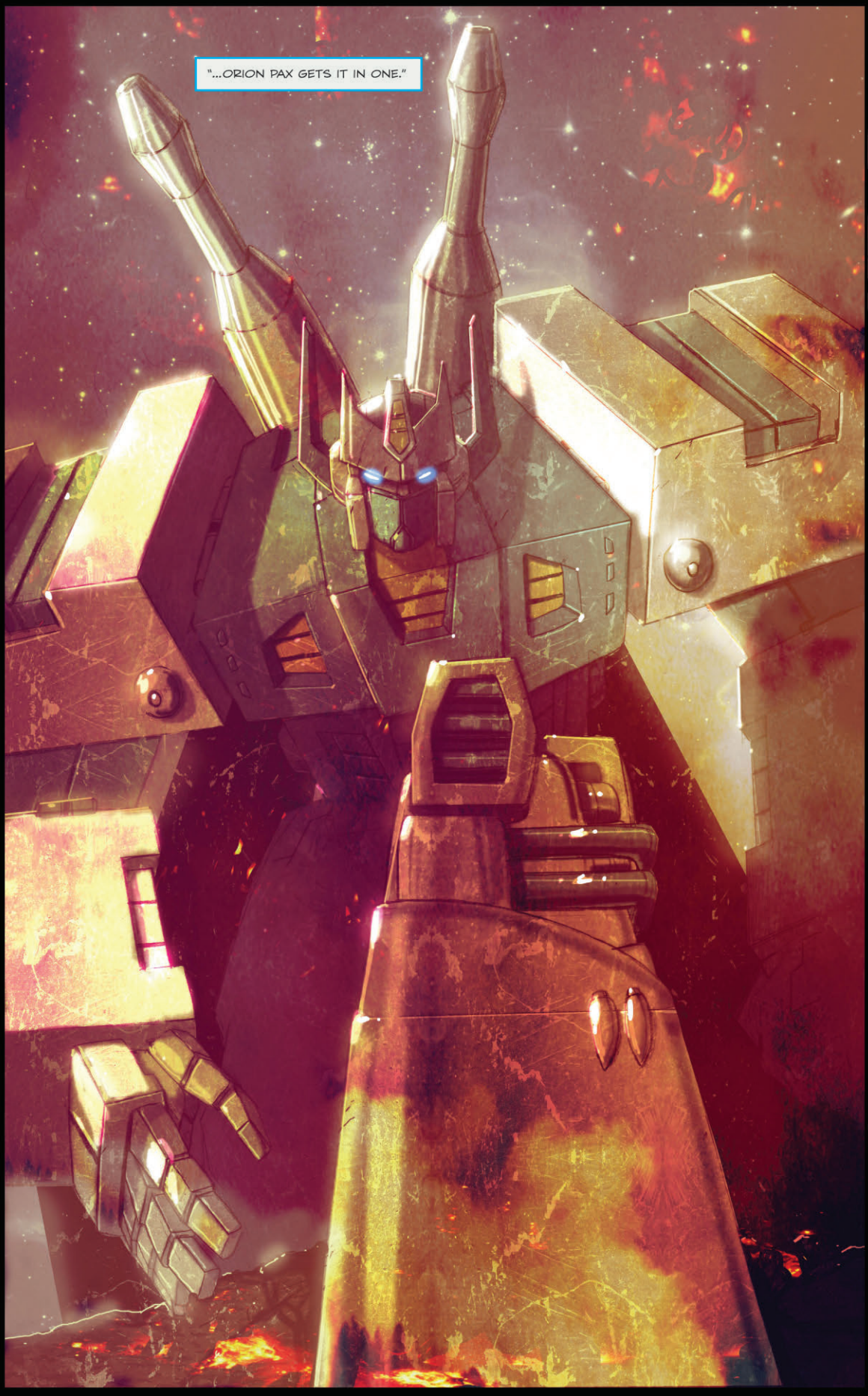
I REMEMBER YOU.
SWAGGH
YOU HAVE ALL LOST THE WAY OF THE TRUE CYBERTRONIAN WARRIOR BORN.
NOW. WHO'S NEXT?
THUMP
TZATT
FOOM
KZAKK KZAKK
OF COURSE GALVATRON MADE IT THROUGH THE PORTAL...
BUMBLEBEE... IT APPEARS...
...GALVATRON IS NOT THE WORST OF OUR SITUATION...

MY UNDEAD TITAN—
—SEE BEFORE YOU, ALL WHO STAND AGAINST THE FUTURE. SEE THEM—
—AND LET THE ANNIHILATION COMMENCE.
"HOW COME YOU'RE ALIVE?"


I MEAN, HOW COME YOU'RE ALIVE GIVEN THAT HARDHEAD SHOT YOU?
I'M NOT GOING TO PRETEND I UNDERSTAND THIS PLACE, RODIMUS.
BUT I THINK THAT HERE, BEING DEAD IS THE EQUIVALENT OF BEING ALIVE.
BECAUSE I WAS DEAD WHEN I FELL THROUGH THE PORTAL—OR ON THE CUSP OF DEATH—BUT I SURVIVED.
IT JUST COST ME MY LIFE.
HM.
IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MAKE SENSE?
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, NIGHTBEAT.
BACK THERE, YOUR BIG ENTRANCE. CYCLONUS SAYS "HANDS OFF" AND YOU'RE ALL "DO WHAT HE SAYS" AND "LISTEN TO ME, THE FATE OF UNIVERSE DEPENDS ON IT."
I DIDN'T EXACTLY SAY—
NO, BUT WHAT WAS IT ALL ABOUT?
HOLD UP YOUR HAND, CYCLONUS.
PLEASE.
I FOUND THIS A FEW MILES AWAY, WHEN I WAS TRACKING YOU. IT'S PRIATIC GLASS.
YOU'RE ALL WEARING FORCEFIELDS PROTECTING YOU FROM THE DEAD UNIVERSE. EXCEPT CYCLONUS' ISN'T—NOT ANY MORE.
I... LANDED BADLY.
WHEN YOUR FORCEFIELD BROKE, THE DEAD UNIVERSE INFECTED YOU...
...I WAS WORRIED THAT BY TOUCHING THE OTHERS YOU'D INFECT THEM—


—BUT WHEN I SHOOK THEIR HANDS, I SENSED THAT THEIR OWN FORCEFIELDS WERE STRONG ENOUGH TO KEEP THEM SAFE.
I'M SORRY, CYCLONUS—YOU'VE BEEN EXPOSED. THE DEAD UNIVERSE HAS CLAIMED YOU.
RECLAIMED ME.
I SPENT SIX MILLION YEARS HERE. IN THE END I COULDN'T OPERATE IN MY OWN UNIVERSE—OUR UNIVERSE—WITHOUT RISKING DEATH.
WHEN CYBERTRON WAS REBORN, I WAS GIVEN A NEW SPARK—
BUT NOW THAT SPARK HAS BEEN TAINTED.
THE CYBERWRAITHS RAN OFF WHEN YOU SHOWED UP, LIKE THEY WERE AFRAID OF YOU—LIKE THEY SENSED YOU WERE A THREAT.
EXACTLY. TO THEM, HE'S A PREDATOR.
NO.
I DO NOT BELONG HERE.
ACTUALLY, YES—YES, YOU DO. YOU BELONG RIGHT THERE.
ALL FOUR OF YOU.
NIGHTBEAT...? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
NOWHERE. DON'T FOLLOW ME, JUST—STAY THERE.

WHAT?!
HELL IS GOING ON?
A CONTAINMENT CUBE!
YOU LED US HERE! TO THIS EXACT SPOT!
WHAT CAN I SAY? ONCE A SLEEPER AGENT, ALWAYS A SLEEPER AGENT.
NOVA PRIME?
BANG...


"...ORION PAX GETS IT IN ONE."

Cover by: PHIL JIMENEZ • Colors by: ROMULO FAJARDO, JR.

CHAPTER 6

Art by: ATILIO ROJO, JAMES RAIZ, and LIVIO RAMONDELLI • Colors by: JOSH PEREZ and LIVIO RAMONDELLI
Letters by: GILBERTO LAZCANO

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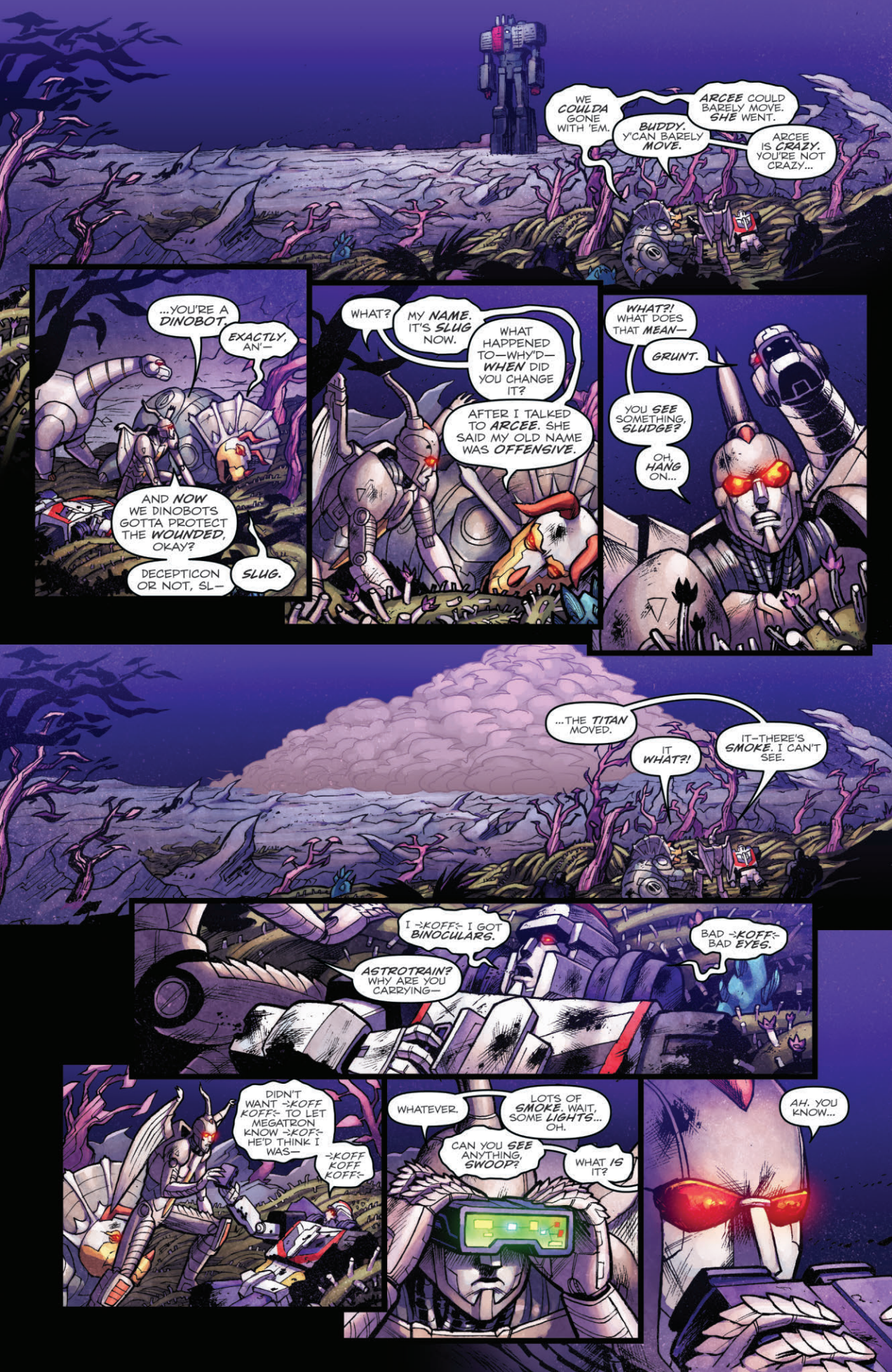
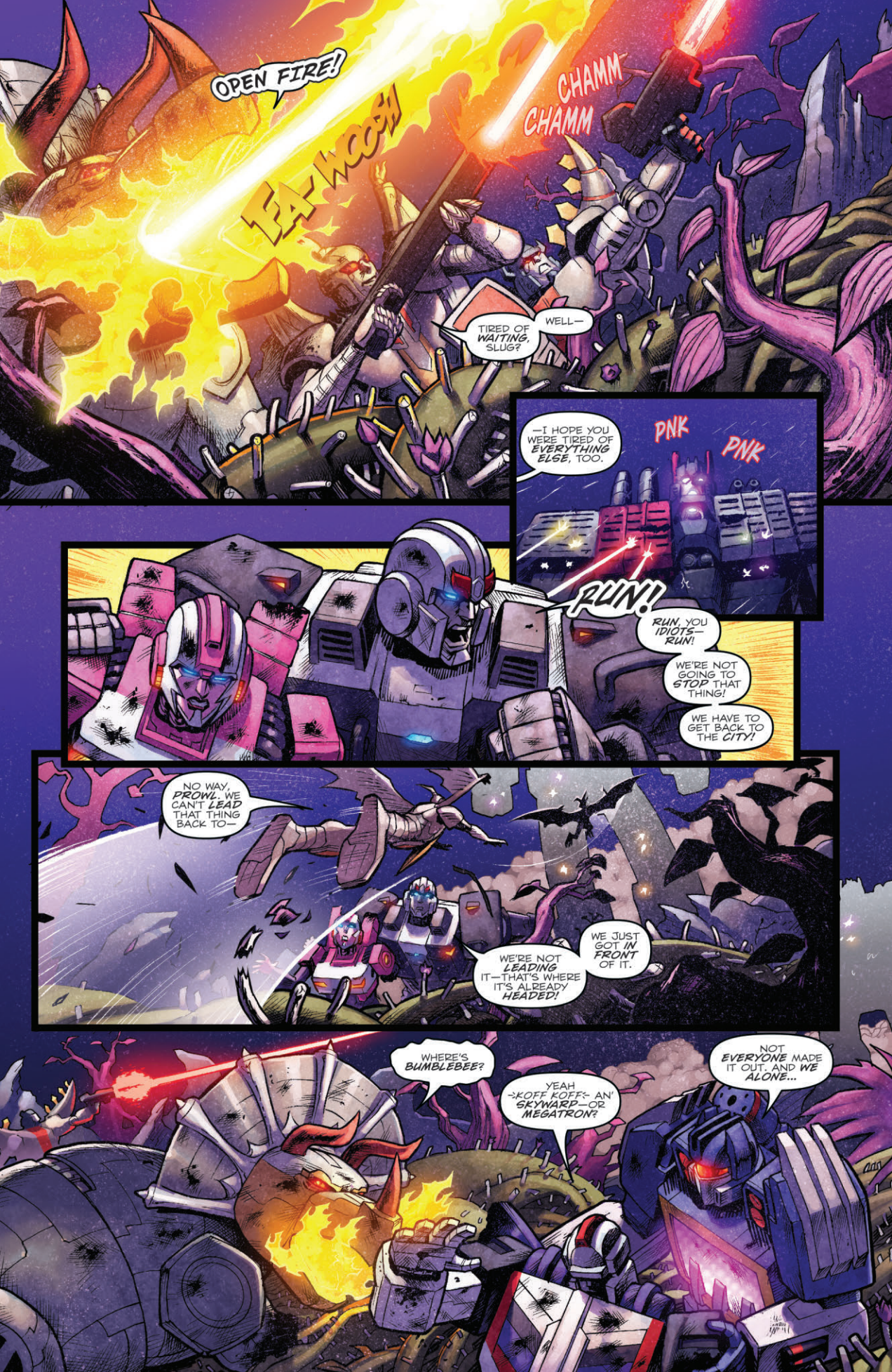
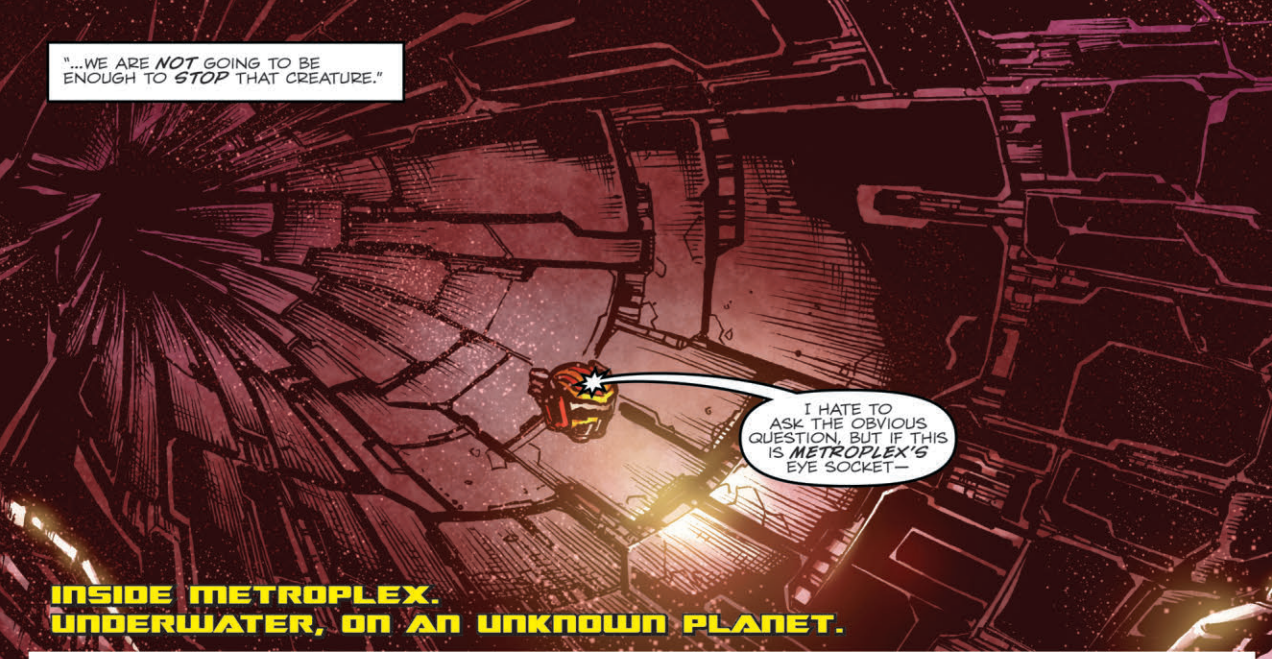

WE COULDA GONE WITH 'EM.
BUDDY. Y'CAN BARELY MOVE.
ARCEE COULD BARELY MOVE. SHE WENT.
ARCEE IS CRAZY. YOU'RE NOT CRAZY...
...YOU'RE A DINOBOT.
EXACTLY. AN'—
AND NOW WE DINOBOTS GOTTA PROTECT THE WOUNDED, OKAY?
DECEPTICON OR NOT, SL—
SLUG.
WHAT?
MY NAME. IT'S SLUG NOW.
WHAT HAPPENED TO—WHY'D—WHEN DID YOU CHANGE IT?
AFTER I TALKED TO ARCEE. SHE SAID MY OLD NAME WAS OFFENSIVE.
WHAT?! WHAT DOES THAT MEAN—
GRUNT.
YOU SEE SOMETHING, SLUDGE?
OH, HANG ON...
...THE TITAN MOVED.
IT WHAT?!
IT—THERE'S SMOKE. I CAN'T SEE.
I -KOFF- I GOT BINOCULARS.
ASTROTRAIN? WHY ARE YOU CARRYING—
BAD -KOFF- BAD EYES.
DIDN'T WANT -KOFF KOFF- TO LET MEGATRON KNOW -KOF- HE'D THINK I WAS—
-KOFF KOFF KOFF-
WHATEVER.
LOTS OF SMOKE. WAIT, SOME LIGHTS... OH.
CAN YOU SEE ANYTHING, SWOOP?
WHAT IS IT?
AH. YOU KNOW...

"...TYPICAL DINOBOT STUFF."
NO EXIT
DARK CYBERTRON CHAPTER 6


OPEN FIRE!
KA-WOOSH!
CHAMM CHAMM
TIRED OF WAITING, SLUG?
WELL—
—I HOPE YOU WERE TIRED OF EVERYTHING ELSE, TOO.
PNK
PNK
RUN!
RUN, YOU IDIOTS—RUN!
WE'RE NOT GOING TO STOP THAT THING!
WE HAVE TO GET BACK TO THE CITY!
NO WAY, PROWL. WE CAN'T LEAD THAT THING BACK TO—
WE'RE NOT LEADING IT—THAT'S WHERE IT'S ALREADY HEADED!
WE JUST GOT IN FRONT OF IT.
WHERE'S BUMBLEBEE?
YEAH -:KOFF KOFF:- AN' SKYWARP—OR MEGATRON?
NOT EVERYONE MADE IT OUT. AND WE ALONE...

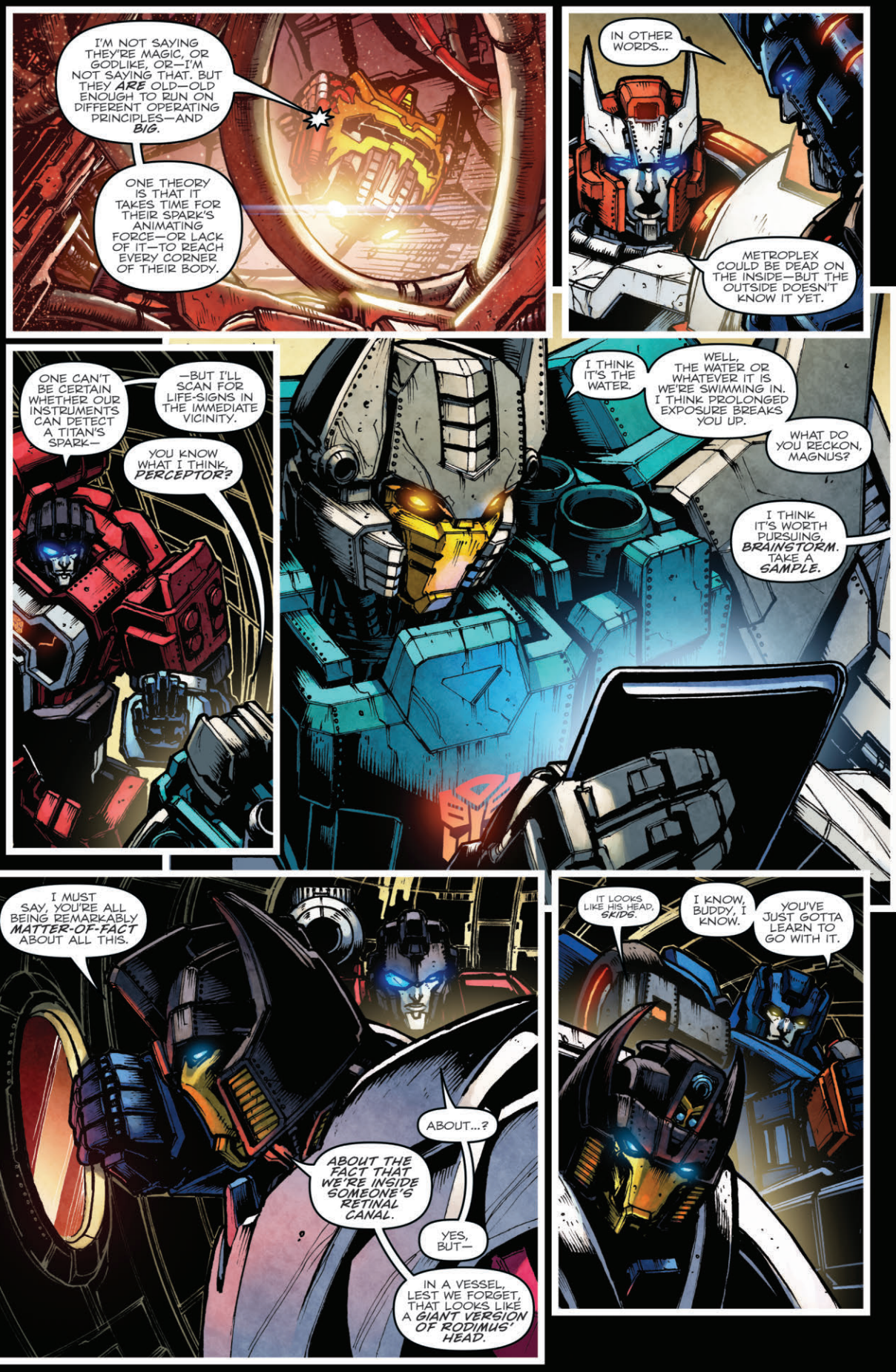


INSIDE METROPLEX.
UNDERWATER, ON AN UNKNOWN PLANET.

—WHERE'S HIS EYE?
I DON'T KNOW, GETAWAY, BUT IT WAS A LOOSE BODY PART THAT LED US HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.*
MAYBE METROPLEX IS FALLING APART.
*SEE DARK CYBERTRON CHAPTER 2.

WELL SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT.
EASY ON THE JARGON, RATCHET. WE DIDN'T ALL GO TO MEDICAL SCHOOL.
SARCASM: THE FIRST SIGN OF A DAMAGED BRAIN MODULE. OTHER SYMPTOMS INCLUDE ME HITTING YOU IN THE FACE.

"IF YOU WANT A FANCIER DIAGNOSIS...
"I'M SEEING EVIDENCE OF CORROSION, DISLOCATION CREEP, KNIFELINE DECAY—AND GOOD OLD RUST.
"SOME OF THAT MAY SIMPLY BE AGE-RELATED. IT'S HARD TO GET SPARE PARTS WHEN YOU'RE A TITAN."


I'M NOT SAYING THEY'RE MAGIC, OR GODLIKE, OR—I'M NOT SAYING THAT. BUT THEY ARE OLD—OLD ENOUGH TO RUN ON DIFFERENT OPERATING PRINCIPLES—AND BIG.
ONE THEORY IS THAT IT TAKES TIME FOR THEIR SPARK'S ANIMATING FORCE—OR LACK OF IT—TO REACH EVERY CORNER OF THEIR BODY.
IN OTHER WORDS...
METROPLEX COULD BE DEAD ON THE INSIDE—BUT THE OUTSIDE DOESN'T KNOW IT YET.
ONE CAN'T BE CERTAIN WHETHER OUR INSTRUMENTS CAN DETECT A TITAN'S SPARK—
—BUT I'LL SCAN FOR LIFE-SIGNS IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY.
YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK, PERCEPTOR?
I THINK IT'S THE WATER.
WELL, THE WATER OR WHATEVER IT IS WE'RE SWIMMING IN. I THINK PROLONGED EXPOSURE BREAKS YOU UP.
WHAT DO YOU RECKON, MAGNUS?
I THINK IT'S WORTH PURSUING, BRAINSTORM. TAKE A SAMPLE.
I MUST SAY, YOU'RE ALL BEING REMARKABLY MATTER-OF-FACT ABOUT ALL THIS.
ABOUT...?
ABOUT THE FACT THAT WE'RE INSIDE SOMEONE'S RETINAL CANAL.
YES, BUT—
IN A VESSEL, LEST WE FORGET, THAT LOOKS LIKE A GIANT VERSION OF RODIMUS' HEAD.
IT LOOKS LIKE HIS HEAD, SKIDS.
I KNOW, BUDDY, I KNOW.
YOU'VE JUST GOTTA LEARN TO GO WITH IT.

THE RESULTS ARE IN.
AND?
THERE ARE SEVEN OF US IN THE POD AND I'M COUNTING EIGHT LIFE-SIGNS...

"...SO THAT BODES WELL."

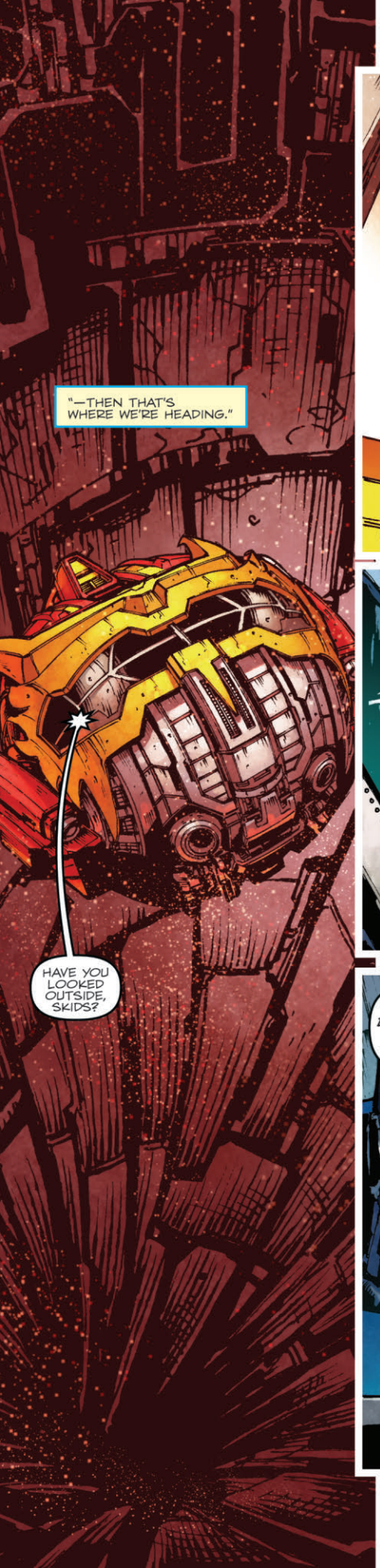
I SUGGEST WE VISIT THE BRAIN—DIAGNOSTICALLY SPEAKING, THAT SHOULD TELL US EVERYTHING WE NEED TO KNOW.
AND THE BRAIN WOULD BE...?
THIRD ON THE LEFT. CAN'T MISS IT. LOOKS LIKE A GIANT BRAIN.
WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THAT SAMPLE, BRAINSTORM?

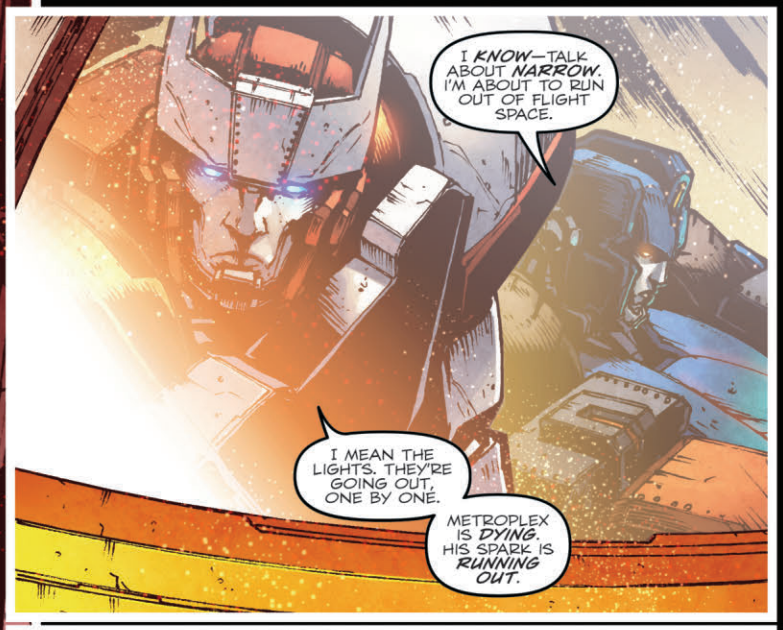
NOTHING, YET—EXCEPT THERE'S SOMETHING IN IT.
SLIVERS OF METAL. FLAKES. ANALYSIS IS INCONCLUSIVE, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE ADMIUM.
THAT WE NEED TO SPEAK TO A METALLURGIST...
WHAT DOES THAT TELL US?

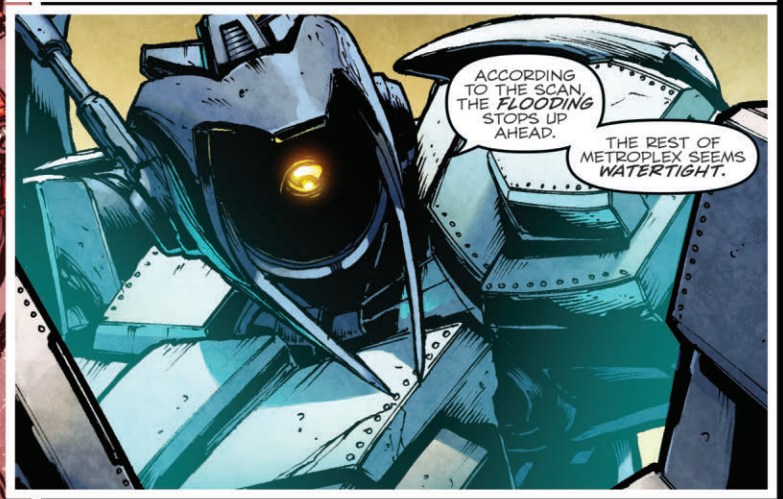
AUTOBOTS IN TROUBLE! EXPLODING PLANET! AUTOBOTS IN TROUBLE! EXPLO–
NEARBY.

ARE YOU SURE THIS IS HIS NUMBER, SKIDS?
IT'S ASKING ME TO LEAVE A—
SWERVE, HI, YEAH, IT'S ME, GETAWAY. WE'VE FOUND TRACES OF ADMIUM INSIDE METROPLEX—INSIDE THE WATER INSIDE METROPLEX—AND WE NEED SOME EXPERT ADVICE.
CALL ME BACK WHEN YOU GET THIS MESSAGE.

WE LEFT THEM FIGHTING UP THERE...
IF WE CAN SAVE METROPLEX, HE CAN END THAT BATTLE IN AN INSTANT.
OKAY, WE'RE ABOUT TO ENTER THE BRAIN CHAMBER. HOPEFULLY, THIS WILL FINALLY GIVE US SOME—
—ANSWERS.
I'M GETTING A HORRIBLE SENSE OF DEJA VU.
NO DEBRIS, NO SIGN OF TRAUMA... THE BRAIN'S BEEN SURGICALLY REMOVED.
IT'S EMPTY!
RATCHET, METROPLEX'S SPARK...
WOULD BE IN HIS CHEST.
OKAY—

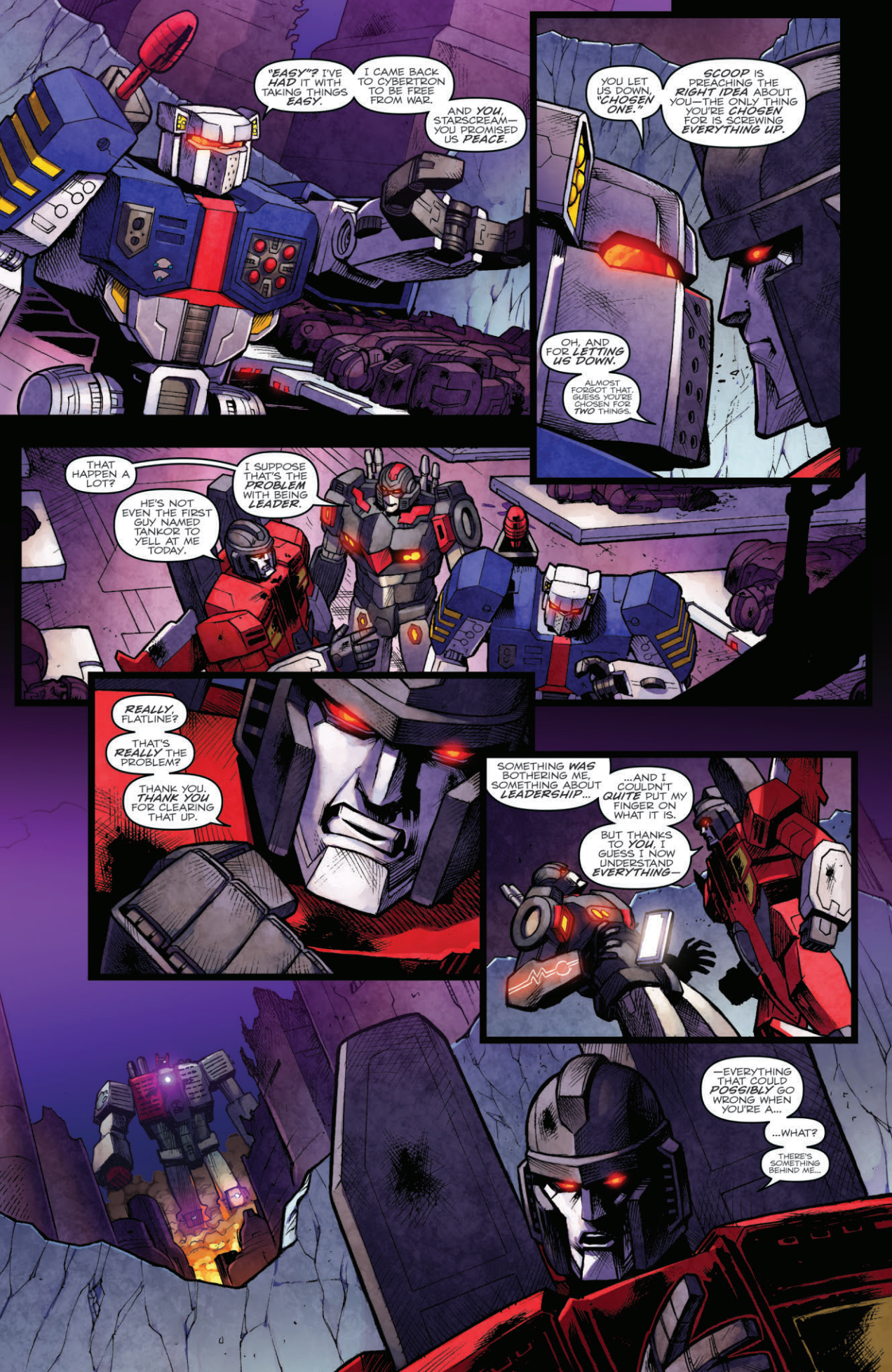

"—THEN THAT'S WHERE WE'RE HEADING."
HAVE YOU LOOKED OUTSIDE, SKIDS?


I *KNOW*—TALK ABOUT *NARROW*. I'M ABOUT TO RUN OUT OF FLIGHT SPACE.
I MEAN THE LIGHTS. THEY'RE GOING OUT, ONE BY ONE.
METROPLEX IS *DYING*. HIS SPARK IS *RUNNING OUT*.

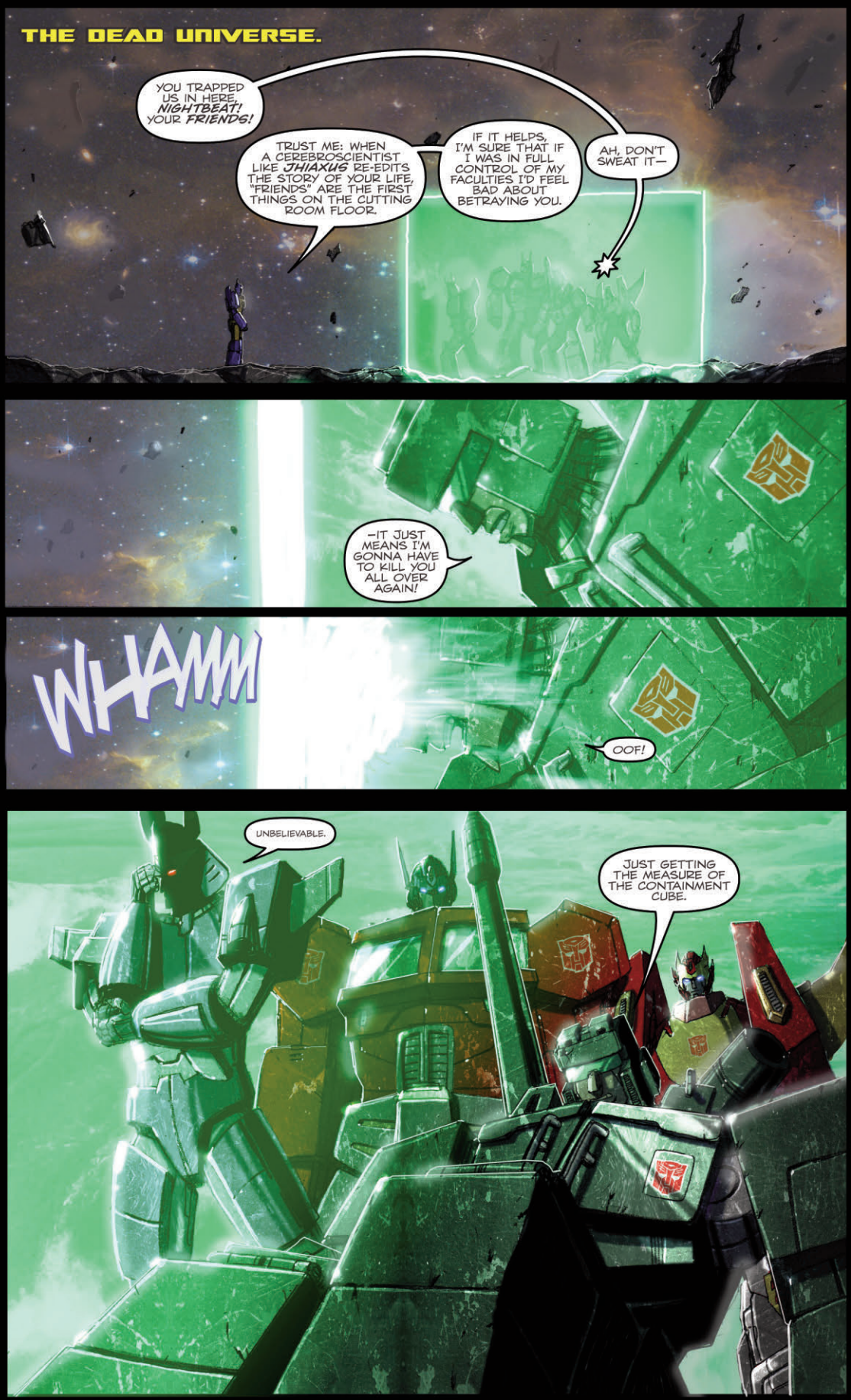

ACCORDING TO THE SCAN, THE *FLOODING* STOPS UP AHEAD.
THE REST OF METROPLEX SEEMS *WATERTIGHT*.

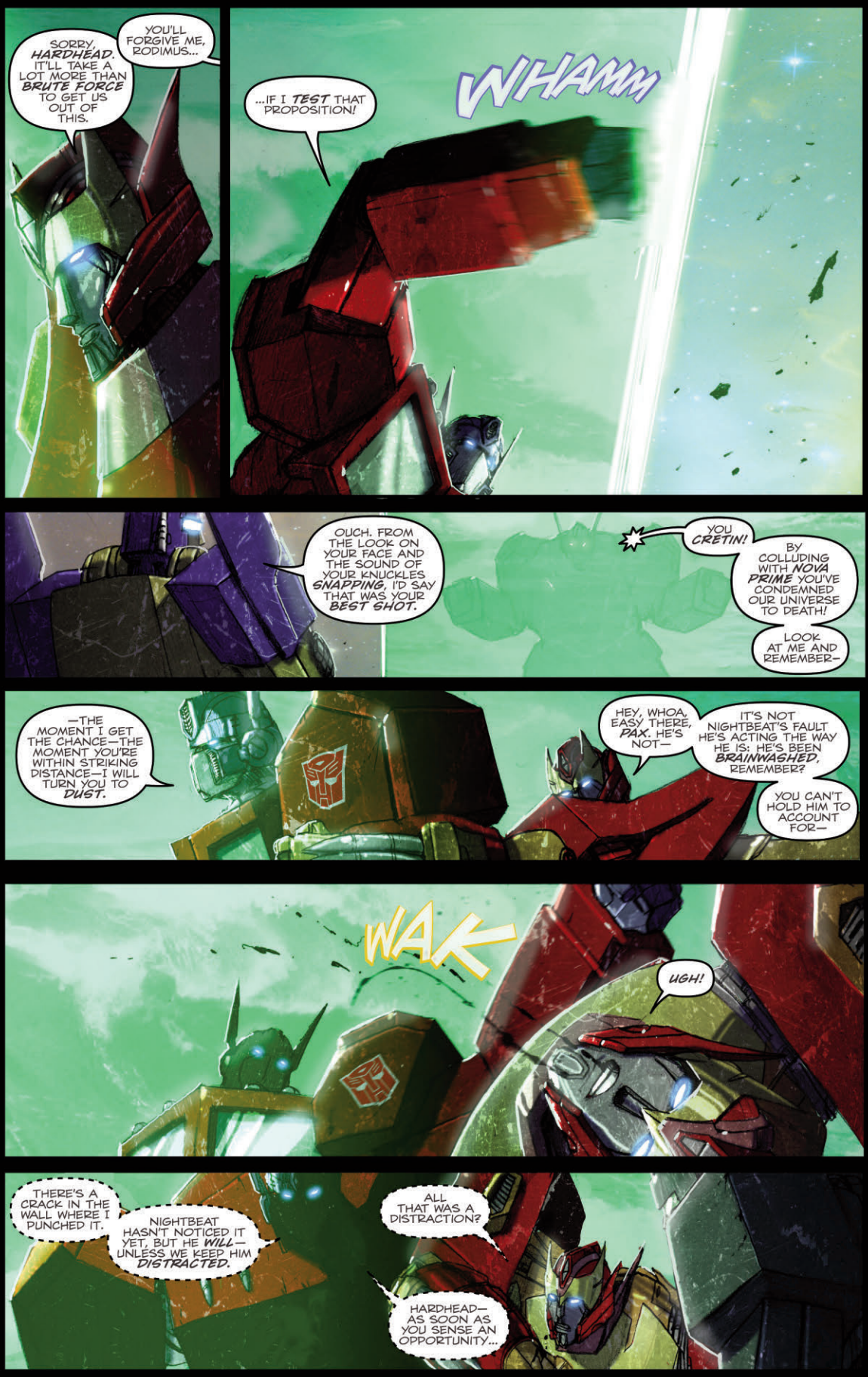
SEEMS THERE'S A *DRY DOCK* NOT FAR FROM HERE.
AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO FINDS THAT SURPRISING?
THE TITANS WERE ONCE *FULLY FUNCTIONING CITIES*—MOBILE HABITATS THAT ALLOWED THE KNIGHTS OF CYBERTRON TO LIVE ANYWHERE, INCLUDING UNDERWATER.
I SAY COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS—

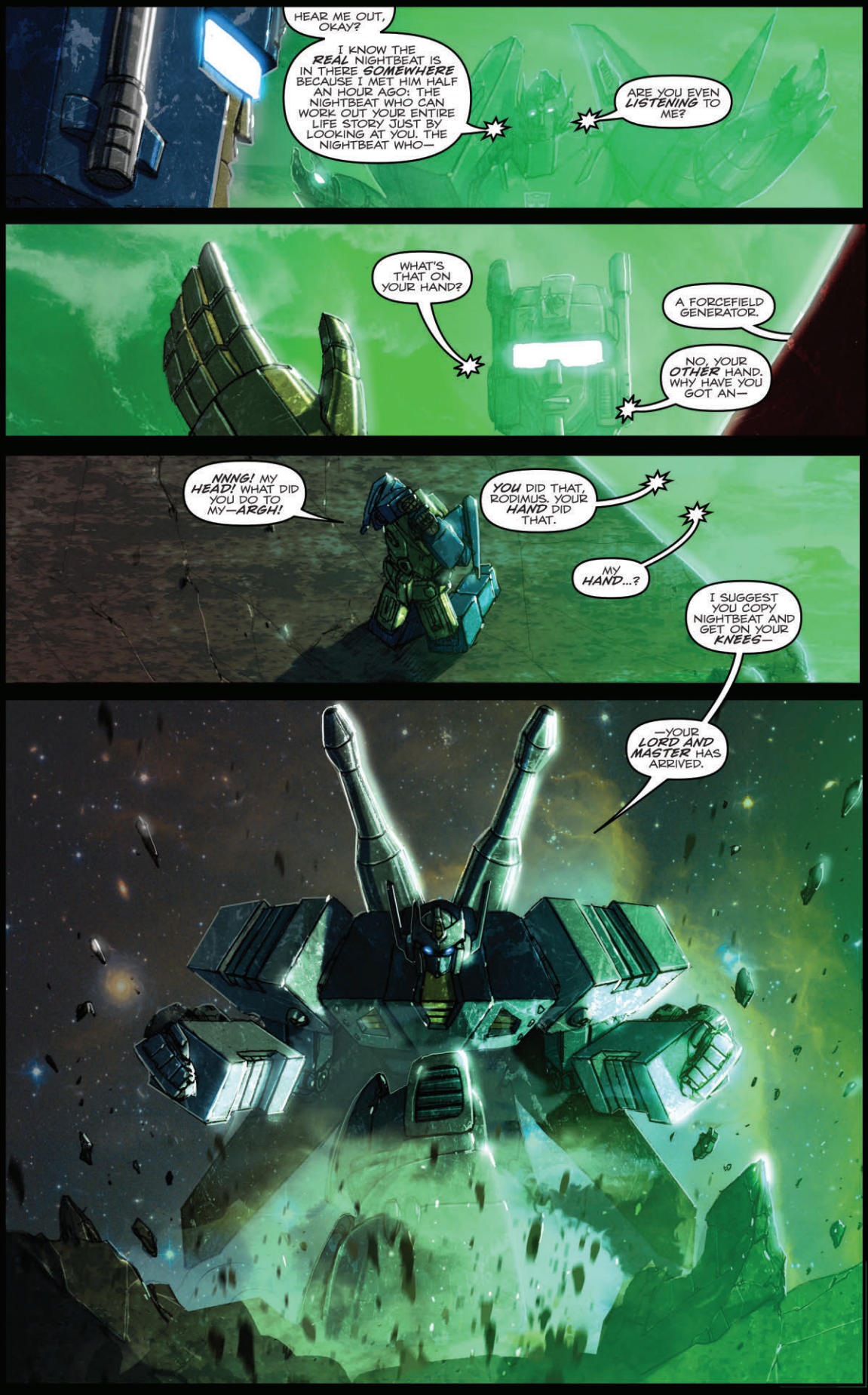
"—AND HEAD FOR DRY LAND."
HOW BAD *IS* IT?
BAD, *STARSCREAM.* YOUR DEATHMARK IS GETTING *BIGGER.*
I'M *AMAZED* YOU'RE STILL *STANDING,* TO BE PERFECTLY—
NOT HOW BAD AM *I!*
HOW BAD IS IT FOR *THEM!?*
HOW MANY OF MY CITIZENS HAVE *FALLEN* TO THIS—THIS—
—TO *THIS?!*
WE'RE ONLY LOOKING AT A *4.6% INSTANT FATALITY RATE,* GIVE OR TAKE.
EASY, *TANKOR.*
WEAK 'BOTS, MOSTLY WOUNDED FROM YOUR *LAST* BIG BATTLE, THE *LAST* TIME YOU LET THINGS GET OUT OF CONTROL—


"EASY"? I'VE HAD IT WITH TAKING THINGS EASY.
I CAME BACK TO CYBERTRON TO BE FREE FROM WAR.
AND YOU, STARSCREAM—YOU PROMISED US PEACE.
YOU LET US DOWN, "CHOSEN ONE."
SCOOP IS PREACHING THE RIGHT IDEA ABOUT YOU—THE ONLY THING YOU'RE CHOSEN FOR IS SCREWING EVERYTHING UP.
OH, AND FOR LETTING US DOWN.
ALMOST FORGOT THAT. GUESS YOU'RE CHOSEN FOR TWO THINGS.
THAT HAPPEN A LOT?
HE'S NOT EVEN THE FIRST GUY NAMED TANKOR TO YELL AT ME TODAY.
I SUPPOSE THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH BEING LEADER.
REALLY, FLATLINE?
THAT'S REALLY THE PROBLEM?
THANK YOU. THANK YOU FOR CLEARING THAT UP.
SOMETHING WAS BOTHERING ME, SOMETHING ABOUT LEADERSHIP...
...AND I COULDN'T QUITE PUT MY FINGER ON WHAT IT IS.
BUT THANKS TO YOU, I GUESS I NOW UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING—
—EVERYTHING THAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG WHEN YOU'RE A...
...WHAT?
THERE'S SOMETHING BEHIND ME...

...ISN'T THERE.


THE DEAD UNIVERSE.
YOU TRAPPED US IN HERE, NIGHTBEAT! YOUR FRIENDS!
TRUST ME: WHEN A CEREBROSCIENTIST LIKE JHIAXUS RE-EDITS THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE, "FRIENDS" ARE THE FIRST THINGS ON THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR.
IF IT HELPS, I'M SURE THAT IF I WAS IN FULL CONTROL OF MY FACULTIES I'D FEEL BAD ABOUT BETRAYING YOU.
AH, DON'T SWEAT IT—
—IT JUST MEANS I'M GONNA HAVE TO KILL YOU ALL OVER AGAIN!
WHAMM
OOF!
UNBELIEVABLE.
JUST GETTING THE MEASURE OF THE CONTAINMENT CUBE.

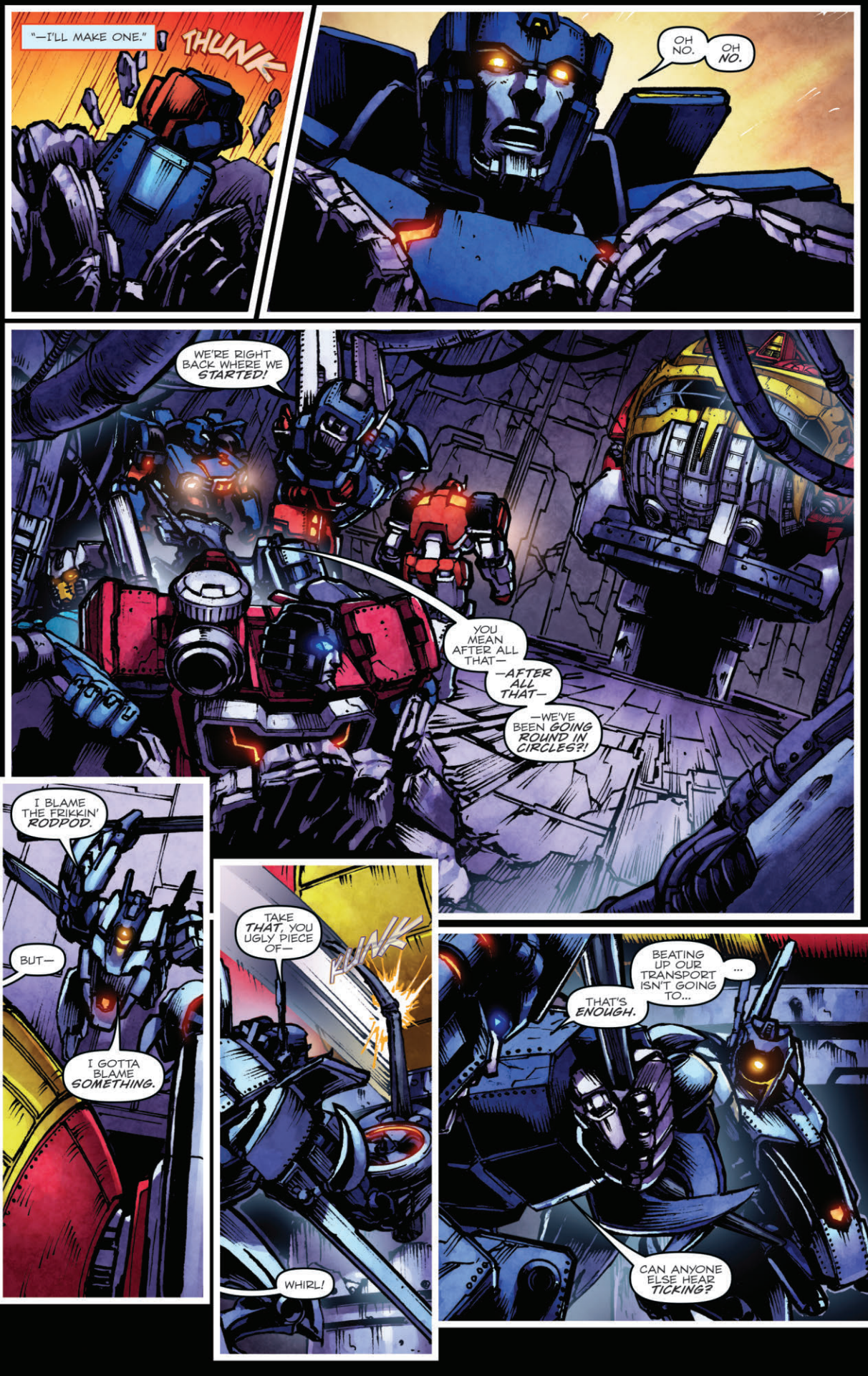

SORRY, HARDHEAD. IT'LL TAKE A LOT MORE THAN BRUTE FORCE TO GET US OUT OF THIS.
YOU'LL FORGIVE ME, RODIMUS...
...IF I TEST THAT PROPOSITION!
WHAMM
OUCH. FROM THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE AND THE SOUND OF YOUR KNUCKLES SNAPPING, I'D SAY THAT WAS YOUR BEST SHOT.
YOU CRETIN!
BY COLLUDING WITH NOVA PRIME YOU'VE CONDEMNED OUR UNIVERSE TO DEATH!
LOOK AT ME AND REMEMBER—
—THE MOMENT I GET THE CHANCE—THE MOMENT YOU'RE WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE—I WILL TURN YOU TO DUST.
HEY, WHOA. EASY THERE, PAX. HE'S NOT—
IT'S NOT NIGHTBEAT'S FAULT HE'S ACTING THE WAY HE IS: HE'S BEEN BRAINWASHED, REMEMBER?
YOU CAN'T HOLD HIM TO ACCOUNT FOR—
WAK
UGH!
THERE'S A CRACK IN THE WALL WHERE I PUNCHED IT.
NIGHTBEAT HASN'T NOTICED IT YET, BUT HE WILL— UNLESS WE KEEP HIM DISTRACTED.
ALL THAT WAS A DISTRACTION?
HARDHEAD— AS SOON AS YOU SENSE AN OPPORTUNITY...


HEAR ME OUT, OKAY?
I KNOW THE REAL NIGHTBEAT IS IN THERE SOMEWHERE BECAUSE I MET HIM HALF AN HOUR AGO: THE NIGHTBEAT WHO CAN WORK OUT YOUR ENTIRE LIFE STORY JUST BY LOOKING AT YOU. THE NIGHTBEAT WHO—
ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME?
WHAT'S THAT ON YOUR HAND?
A FORCEFIELD GENERATOR.
NO, YOUR OTHER HAND. WHY HAVE YOU GOT AN—
NNNG! MY HEAD! WHAT DID YOU DO TO MY—ARGH!
YOU DID THAT, RODIMUS. YOUR HAND DID THAT.
MY HAND...?
I SUGGEST YOU COPY NIGHTBEAT AND GET ON YOUR KNEES—
—YOUR LORD AND MASTER HAS ARRIVED.

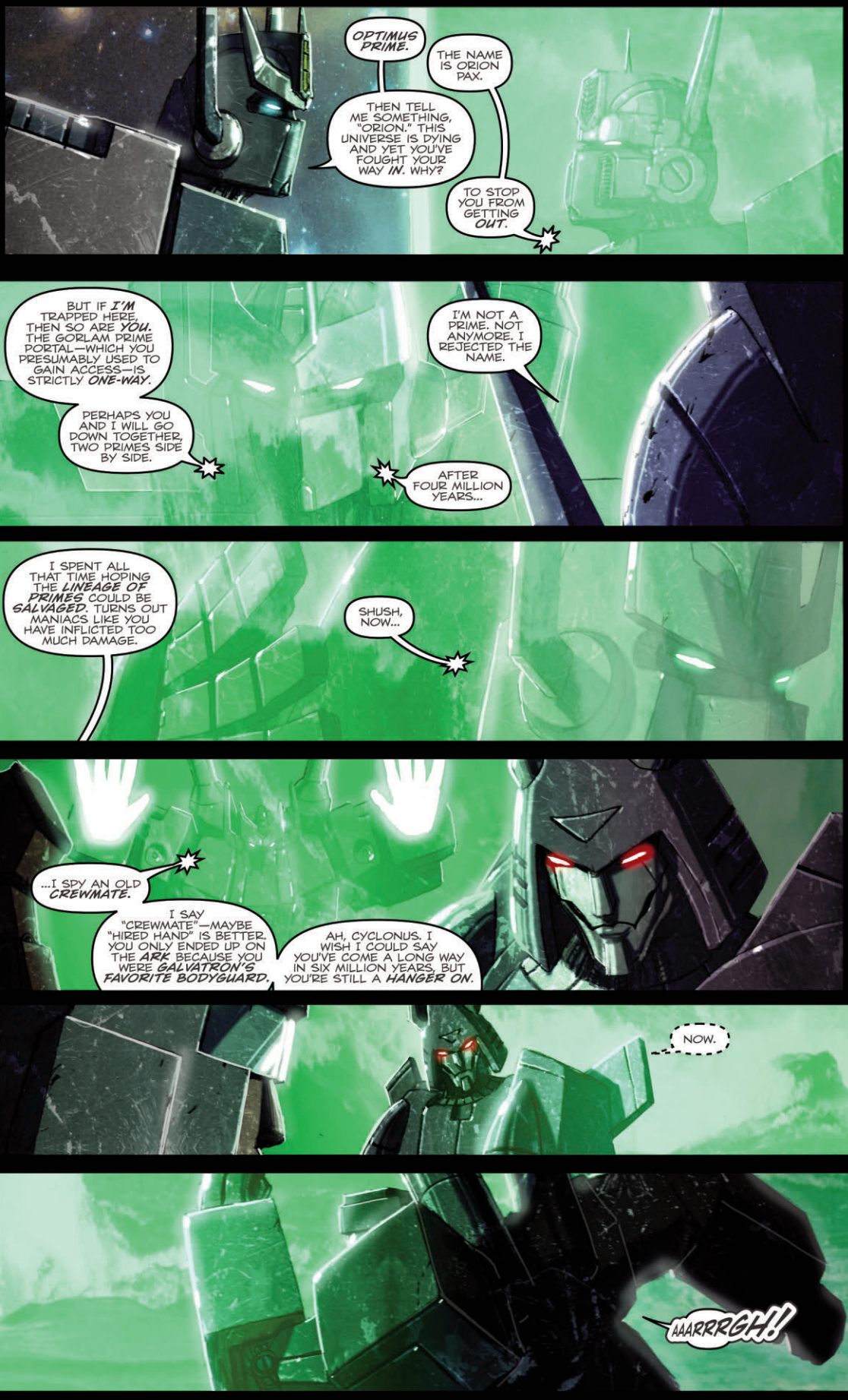
A DRY DOCK INSIDE METROPLEX.
GOOD TO BE OUT OF THAT POD.
WHOEVER'S GOT THE LIST OF *THINGS LIKELY TO TIP WHIRL OVER THE EDGE*, PLEASE ADD "*CONFINED SPACES*."
WE'LL HAVE TO FIND METROPLEX'S SPARK ON FOOT—*QUICKLY*.
BEST CASE SCENARIO: HE'S ALIVE AND HE HELPS US SAVE THE OTHERS.
WORST CASE SCENARIO: IT'S TOO LATE TO SAVE HIM *OR* THE OTHERS.
WEIRD. SOME KIND OF *ARROW*...
HAND DRAWN. AND POINTING TOWARDS THE SPARK CHAMBER...
AND ANOTHER ONE OVER THERE. POINTING IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION.
WHAT DO WE DO, FEARLESS LEADER? FOLLOW THEM?
WELL WE CERTAINLY CAN'T IGNORE THEM... IT'D BE LIKE IGNORING A *TRAFFIC SIGN*.
AND THAT WAY ANARCHY LIES...
COME ON, PERCEPTOR!
NO ONE'S LOCKING THE *RODPOD*?
HOPEFULLY SOMEONE WILL STEAL IT.

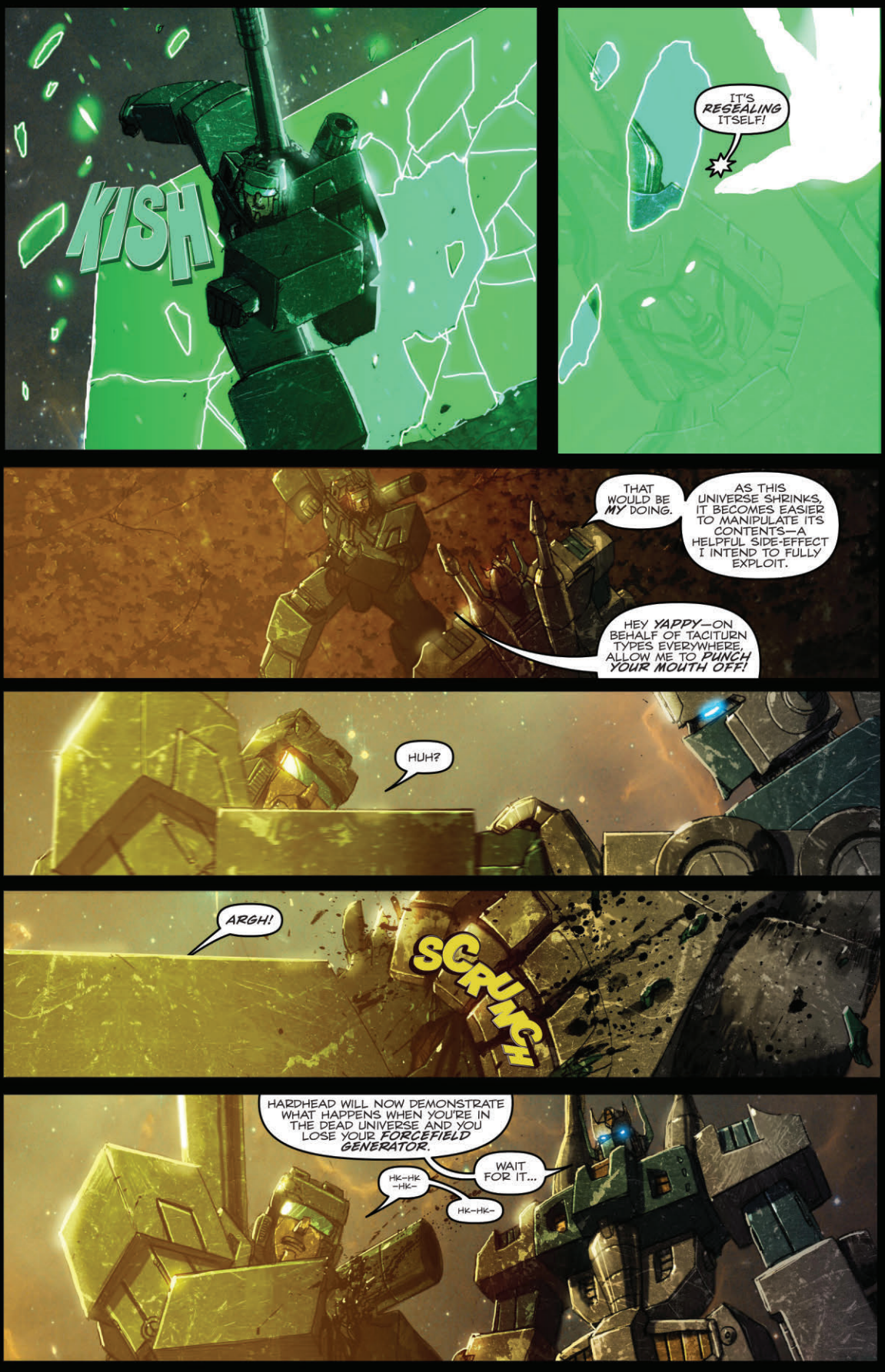
ALRIGHT, EVERYONE— WHEREVER THE ARROWS GO, WE GO.

WHAT DO WE MAKE OF THIS, THEN?
THE ARROW'S POINTING TO THE CEILING, BUT THERE'S NOTHING THERE. NO HATCHWAY, NO DOOR...
HANG ON—

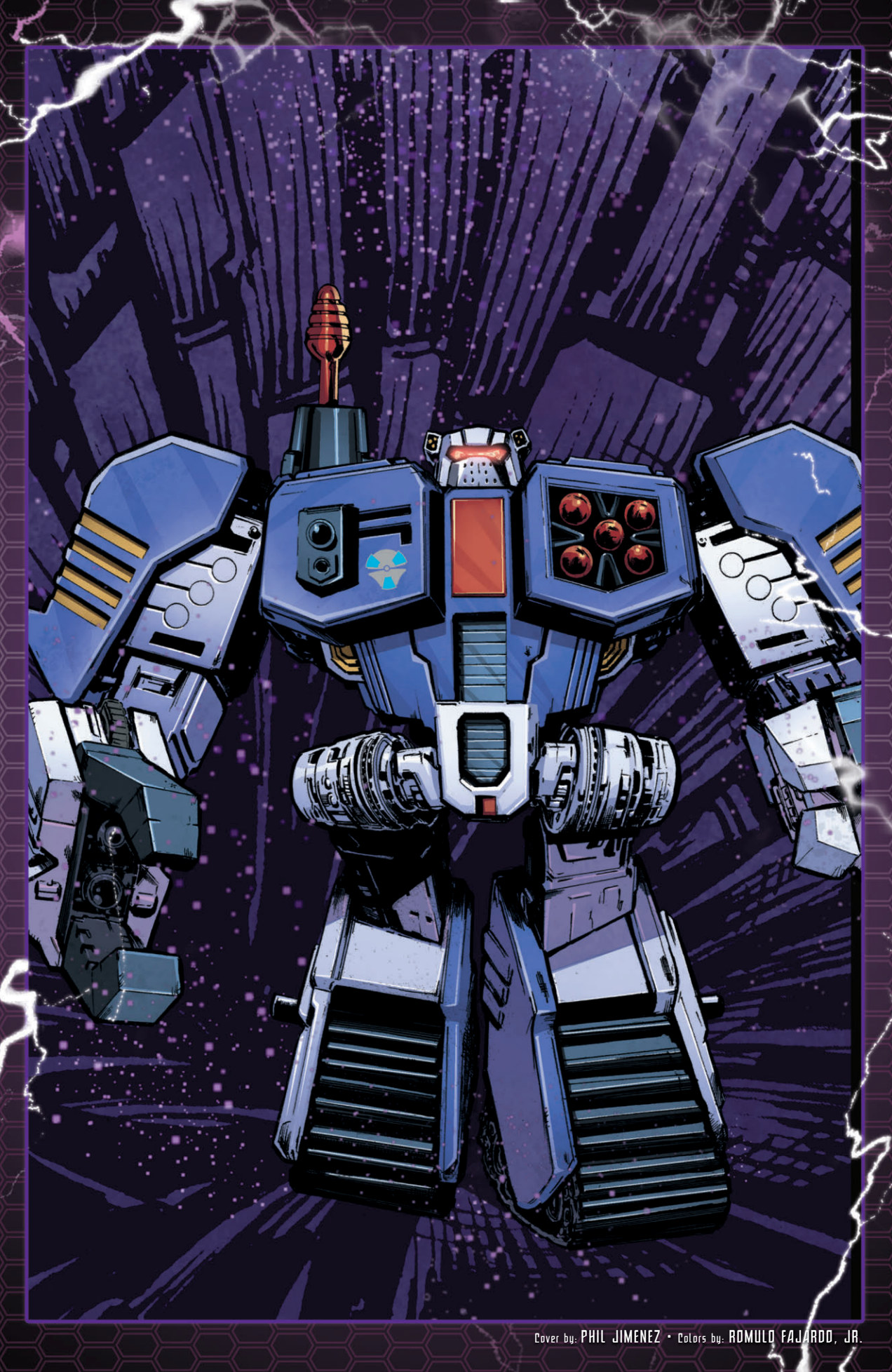

"—I'LL MAKE ONE."
THUNK
OH NO. OH NO.
WE'RE RIGHT BACK WHERE WE STARTED!
YOU MEAN AFTER ALL THAT—
—AFTER ALL THAT—
—WE'VE BEEN GOING ROUND IN CIRCLES?!
I BLAME THE FRIKKIN' RODPOD.
BUT—
I GOTTA BLAME SOMETHING.
TAKE THAT, YOU UGLY PIECE OF—
PUNK
WHIRL!
BEATING UP OUR TRANSPORT ISN'T GOING TO...
...
THAT'S ENOUGH.
CAN ANYONE ELSE HEAR TICKING?

LOOK.
SOMEONE'S BEEN HERE. SOMEONE'S BEEN *TAMPERING.*
UP THERE, IN THE DOORWAY!
ONE OF THE *MINICONS!* HE MUST'VE FOLLOWED US!
WHAT'S HE GOT IN HIS HAND? IT'S HOOKED UP TO THE RODPOD...
IT LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF—
IT'S A *DETONATOR!*
KLIK
BUH-KOOM


OPTIMUS PRIME.
THE NAME IS ORION PAX.
THEN TELL ME SOMETHING, "ORION." THIS UNIVERSE IS DYING AND YET YOU'VE FOUGHT YOUR WAY IN. WHY?
TO STOP YOU FROM GETTING OUT.
BUT IF I'M TRAPPED HERE, THEN SO ARE YOU. THE GORLAM PRIME PORTAL—WHICH YOU PRESUMABLY USED TO GAIN ACCESS—IS STRICTLY ONE-WAY.
PERHAPS YOU AND I WILL GO DOWN TOGETHER, TWO PRIMES SIDE BY SIDE.
I'M NOT A PRIME. NOT ANYMORE. I REJECTED THE NAME.
AFTER FOUR MILLION YEARS...
I SPENT ALL THAT TIME HOPING THE LINEAGE OF PRIMES COULD BE SALVAGED. TURNS OUT MANIACS LIKE YOU HAVE INFLICTED TOO MUCH DAMAGE.
SHUSH, NOW...
...I SPY AN OLD CREWMATE.
I SAY "CREWMATE"—MAYBE "HIRED HAND" IS BETTER. YOU ONLY ENDED UP ON THE ARK BECAUSE YOU WERE GALVATRON'S FAVORITE BODYGUARD.
AH, CYCLONUS. I WISH I COULD SAY YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY IN SIX MILLION YEARS, BUT YOU'RE STILL A HANGER ON.
NOW.
AAARRRGH!


KISH
IT'S REGEALING ITSELF!
THAT WOULD BE MY DOING.
AS THIS UNIVERSE SHRINKS, IT BECOMES EASIER TO MANIPULATE ITS CONTENTS—A HELPFUL SIDE-EFFECT I INTEND TO FULLY EXPLOIT.
HEY YAPPY—ON BEHALF OF TACITURN TYPES EVERYWHERE, ALLOW ME TO PUNCH YOUR MOUTH OFF!
HUH?
ARGH!
SCRUNCH
HARDHEAD WILL NOW DEMONSTRATE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE IN THE DEAD UNIVERSE AND YOU LOSE YOUR FORCEFIELD GENERATOR.
WAIT FOR IT...
HK-HK-HK-
HK-HK-

—HK—
—!
HARDHEAD!
AND AS FOR THE REST OF YOU, I'M TAKING YOU TO MEET A FRIEND OF MINE.
I DON'T KNOW HIS NAME, BUT I CAN TELL YOU WHAT HE TURNS INTO...
"...A SPACE-BRIDGE."
CONTINUED IN DARK CYBERTRON VOLUME 2!



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VOLUME 1

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